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The basilica of Ascalon: marble, imperial art and architecture in Roman Palestine

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with contributions by Antje Krug and Ze'ev Pearl

This paper intends to reconstruct the basilica of the late 2nd-early 3rd c. in the civic center of Ascalon and place it in the context of Roman imperial art in Palestine. Although unearthed in the early 1920s, and one of the relatively few known monumental buildings of Roman Palestine (at least until the Scythopolis–Beth She'an excavations began), it has not been the subject of any detailed study. It is important because of the quantity of marble pieces that may be attributed to it.[1]

Ascalon: the historical background

Ascalon was one of the most important towns on the southern Mediterranean coast of Palestine (fig.1). It was a harbor and an important point on roads, particularly the 'Via Maris' linking Egypt and Africa with Syria and Asia. Ascalon was strongly influenced by Greek culture like other sites along the coast,[2] although Philistine cults such as Derketo seem to have continued.[3] Strong Hellenization took place during the Hellenistic period. At that time Ascalon seems to have been a rather small town: Strabo calls it a small and unimportant city (16.2. 29) although Pliny in the 1st c. C.E. mentions it as a free city (*oppidum Ascalo liberum*). Herod the Great developed a special relationship with the town and built a basilica and stoas.[4] According to Josephus the town was burnt down during the First Jewish War,[5] but this has not been confirmed by archaeological evidence. The town struck its own coins in 67/68, 72/73, and until the 3rd c. Those from the 70s were countermarked with symbols of Legio X Fretensis.

Hadrian came to Palestine in 129 and visited Gaza; it is quite likely that he also visited Ascalon, which struck a coin in his honour. Septimius Severus visited Palestine on two occasions, although evidence for a visit to Ascalon is weak.[6] Caracalla visited the town, and the Antonine Itinerary provides evidence for its place in the road-system.[7] The peak of the city's prosperity fell within this period of the 2nd and early 3rd c., as is true for many parts of the province. Our knowledge of the plan and character of the city in this period is assisted by some later sources. Theophanes, an Egyptian clerk, journeyed in Palestine from 317 to 323, just before the great changes which probably occurred in the town after Constantine. He reported spending 600 drachmai visiting the temple, the 'golden basilica', the theater, and the odeum (papyrus 627, ll. 213-20).[8] Of the buildings mentioned only the basilica is known today. The

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1 Otherwise Caesarea and Scythopolis are the cities with the best evidence for the intensive employment of marble; cf. M. L. Fischer, *Das korinthische Kapitell im Alten Israel in der hellenistischen und römischen Periode* (Mainz 1990), with maps of the distribution of marble capitals; and Fischer, *Marble studies* (forthcoming).

2 J. Elayi, "Pénétration grecque en Phénicie sous l'empire perse," *Travaux et mémoires, études anciennes* 2 (Nancy 1988).

3 J. H. Iliffe, "A hoard of bronzes from Askalon (c.4 century B.C.)," *QDAP* 5 (1935) 61-68.

4 Jos., *BJ* 1.422-25 and *AntJ* 15. 328-30. We will consider below if this is the same basilica as that treated in this article.

5 Jos., *BJ* 2.460.

6 J. Hasebroek, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Septimius Severus* (Heidelberg 1923).

7 *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti* (G. Parthey and M. Pinder, edd.) (Berlin 1848) 151.1; 199.11; 200.3.

8 C. H. Roberts, E. G. Turner, *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin papyri in the John Rylands Library* 4 (Manchester 1952) nos. 627-28, 630, 638; cf. Y. Hirschfeld, "A busy commercial town in the Roman-Byzantine period," in D. Appel (ed.), *Ashqelon – 4000 years of history* (Tel Aviv) 1, 138-65 (Hebrew).

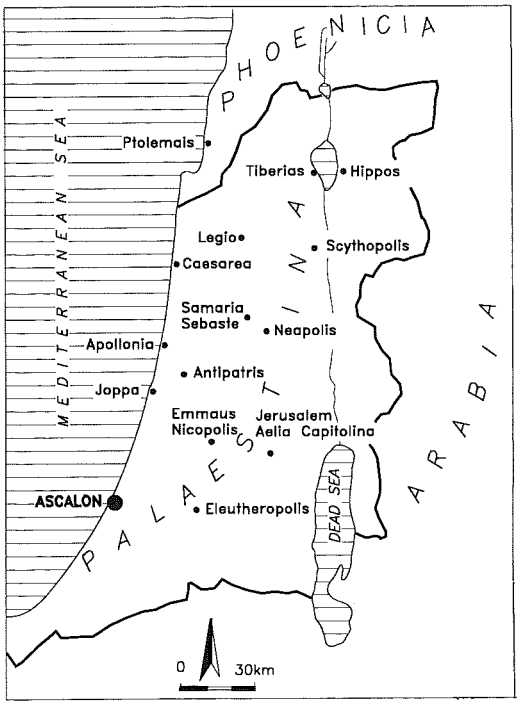

Fig.1. Map of Roman Palestine.

Madaba map of the 6th c. provides a view of the town at that date, with large colonnades and the huge basilica surviving from the Roman city. Roman Ascalon followed roughly the line of the Crusader Walls, with an oval plan (fig.2).[9] From north to south it measured *c.*1100 m, from east to west *c.*600 m. Its area covered *c.*520 dunam (130 acres), which makes it a city of average size, half the size of Scythopolis but double that of Eleutheropolis.[10] No traces of streets or other major Roman buildings apart from the basilica are known. Most of the population was pagan (there is evidence for the cults of Astarte/ Aphrodite, the Semitic Derceto, the Phoenician war-god Phanebal, and Nemesis) but there was also a Jewish minority. Later some churches are known in and around the city. Its harbor saw regular use during the period of Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

Brief history of archaeological investigations[11]

In 1815 Lady Lucy Stanhope excavated in the area of the civic center. Besides a cuirassed statue of a Severan emperor,[12] fragments of sculpture and pottery were found. Then the site became the target of destructive activities including looting.[13] The first systematic excavations were conducted by the Palestine Exploration Fund in two particular areas, the Tell and the Roman civic center (see below).[14] Subsequently some tombs, including the "painted tomb", were excavated,[15] and churches.[16] Since 1985 intensive excavations have been carried out by an American project under L. Stager, mainly at the old Tel in the NW part of the site and at the central mound near the ancient harbor.[17] As well as earlier remains these excavations have revealed a late-Roman bath-house. Rescue excavations conducted by the Israel Antiquities

9 D. Pringle, "King Richard I and the walls of Ascalon," *PEQ* 116 (1984) 133-47, and see the attempt at a plan of the Roman city in Hirschfeld (supra n.8) 158.

10 Cf. M. Broshi, "The population of western Palestine in the Roman-Byzantine period," *BASOR* 236 (1979) 1-10.

11 For a detailed note on the history of excavations see R. Wenning, "Eine Darstellung des Caracalla in Aschkelon?" in *Mousikos Aner: Festschrift M. Wegner* (Bonn 1992) 499-510. See also Avi-Yonah in the *Encyclopedia of archaeological excavations in the Holy Land* (1975) 121-30.

12 C. L. Meryon, *Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope* III (London, repr. 1983) 161; D. K. Hill, "A Roman emperor in armor," *Bulletin Walters Art Gallery* 14.2 (November 1961) 1-2, fig.; C. C. Vermeule, "Hellenistic and Roman cuirassed statues, a supplement," *Berytus* 15, 1964, 95-110.

13 See, e.g., H. Thiersch, "Berichte 2. Archäologischer Jahresbericht," *ZDPV* 37 (1914) 72: "stets ist der Platz ein ergiebiger Fundort fuer Statuen, Reliefs."

14 For preliminary reports see J. Garstang in *PEFQSt* 1921, 12-16, 73-75, 76-90, 162-69; 1922, 22-23, 112-19; 1924, 24-35.

15 J. Ory, "A painted tomb near Ascalon," *QDAP* 8 (1939) 41-42.

16 Avi-Yonah in *Encyclopedia* (supra n.11) *s.v.* Ascalon.

17 Cf. L. E. Stager, *Ashkelon discovered. From Canaanites and Philistines to Romans and Moslems* (*BAR* special number 1991, reprinting *BAR* March-April 1991, 25-43; May-June 1991, 27-42 and July-August 1991, 35-53, 72-73).

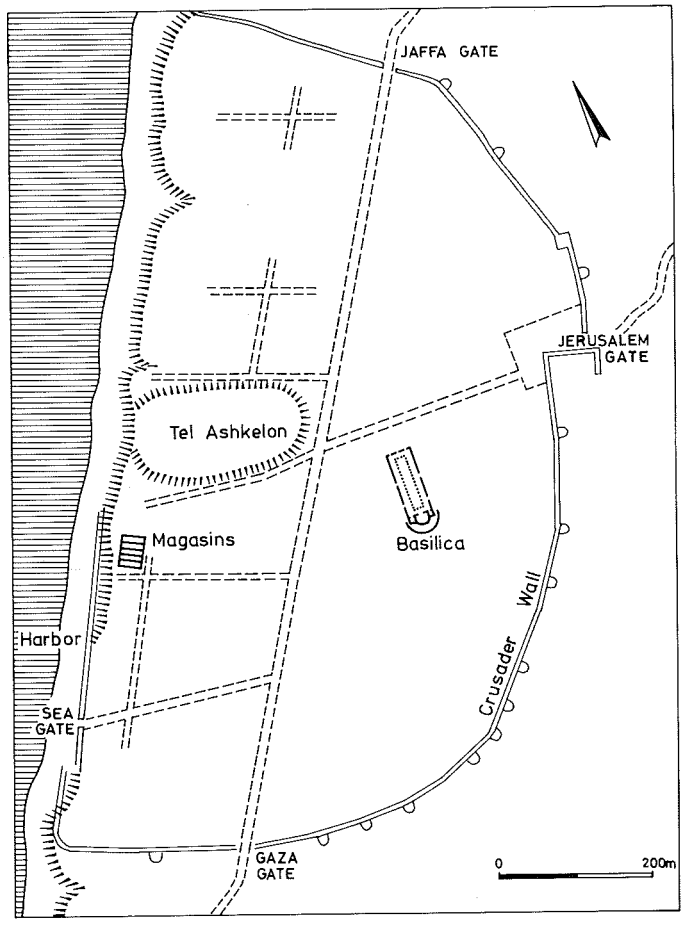

Fig.2. Plan of Ascalon (adapted from Hirschfeld [supra n.8] fig. on p.158).

Authority on the NE side of the city have revealed an important industrial zone of the Byzantine period with wine-presses and pottery kilns that produced Ascalon or Gaza amphoras for the famous Ascalon/ Gaza wine.[18] Unfortunately the recent excavations have not added any details concerning the urban development of the Roman city center.

As mentioned, the British excavations of 1920-21 under J. Garstang brought to light the remains of a large civic center, consisting of an elongated basilica (110 x 37 m), called a 'peristyle' by the excavator, a semicircular apsidal structure, which we may identify with the *curia*, and shrines.[19] During the excavations some granite columns and fragments of heart-shaped pillars of conglomerate were found, as well as marble pedestal-bases, Corinthian capitals, and fragments of sculptures.

Among items lying on the site or deposited in the Afridar Archaeological collection the following may be attributed to the basilica on the basis of Garstang's notes and their typological features:

Architectural pieces attributable to the basilica

1. Two pedestals with Attic-Ionic bases (fig.3).[20] Monolithic, square shape. Marble, one left unfinished.
h 80 cm; h of base 45 cm; pedestal 110 cm square; d of base 100 cm.
Two profiled bands on upper and lower end, with flat dado between.
Typical Roman Attic-Ionic base with 2 tori divided by 1 scotia. They belonged to the 2 rows of columns dividing the basilica into 3 naves.

2. Heart-shaped pedestal with base (fig.4).[21] Marble.
Outer sides of pedestal 150 cm. Same shape and size as the pedestal base above.

3. Heart-shaped columns (fig.5a-b). Conglomerate.
Outer square 80 x 80 cm with 2 protruding half-columns of d 40 cm.

4. Columns, monolithic. Grey granite and conglomerate.

5. Base and pedestal of engaged corner column (fig.6a-c).
h 30 cm; l 79 cm; w 35 cm; d of protruding base 27 cm. It may derive from the second storey.

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18 *Archaeological Newsletter* 100 (1993) 86-91 (Hebrew); cf. also P. Mayerson, "The Gaza 'wine' jar (*gazition*) and the 'lost' Ashkelon jar (*askalonion*)," *IEJ* 42 (1992) 76-80.

19 See chiefly *PEFQSt* 1924, 24-35 with plates I-II.

20 Garstang 1924, fig.1.

21 Ibid.

Fig.3. Pedestal with base and capital of main order.

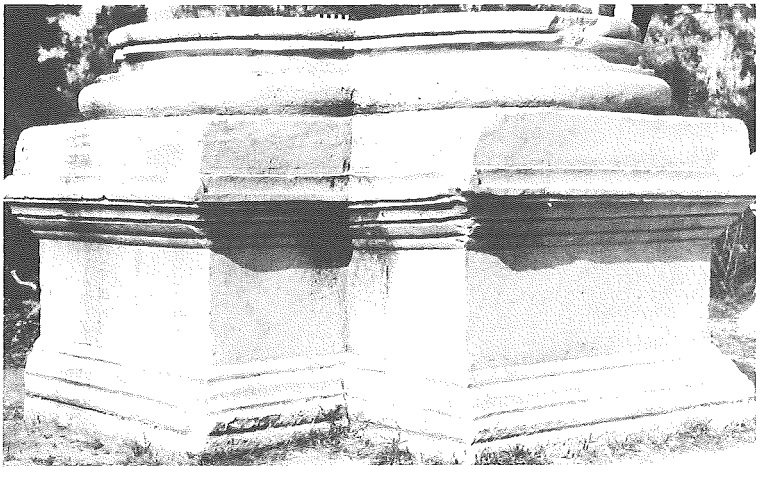

Fig.4. Heart-shaped pedestal with base of main order.

Fig.5. Fragment of heart-shaped column of the main order, front and back.

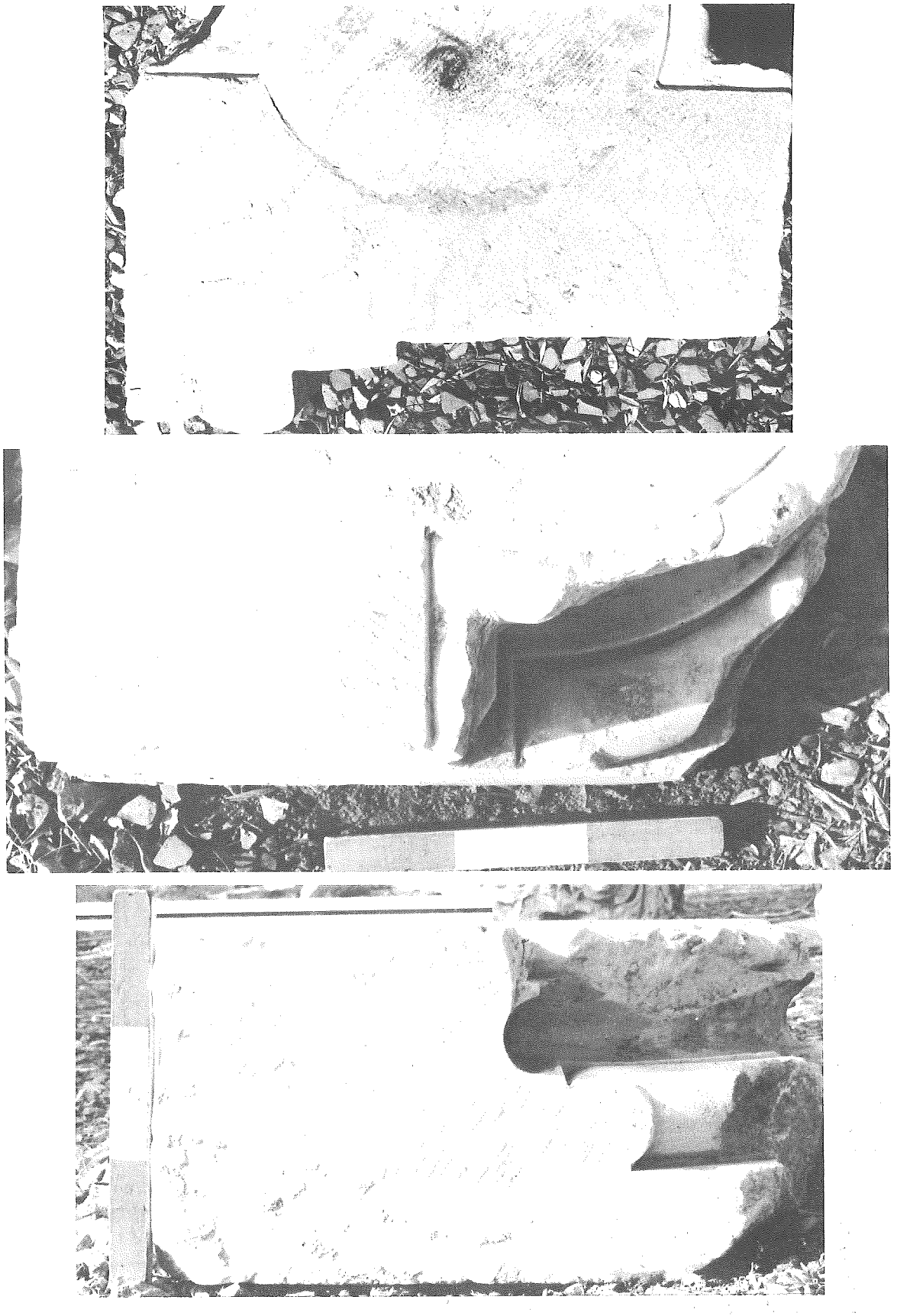

Fig.6a-c. Attic-Ionic base of engaged corner column of the second storey, seen from above, front, and side.

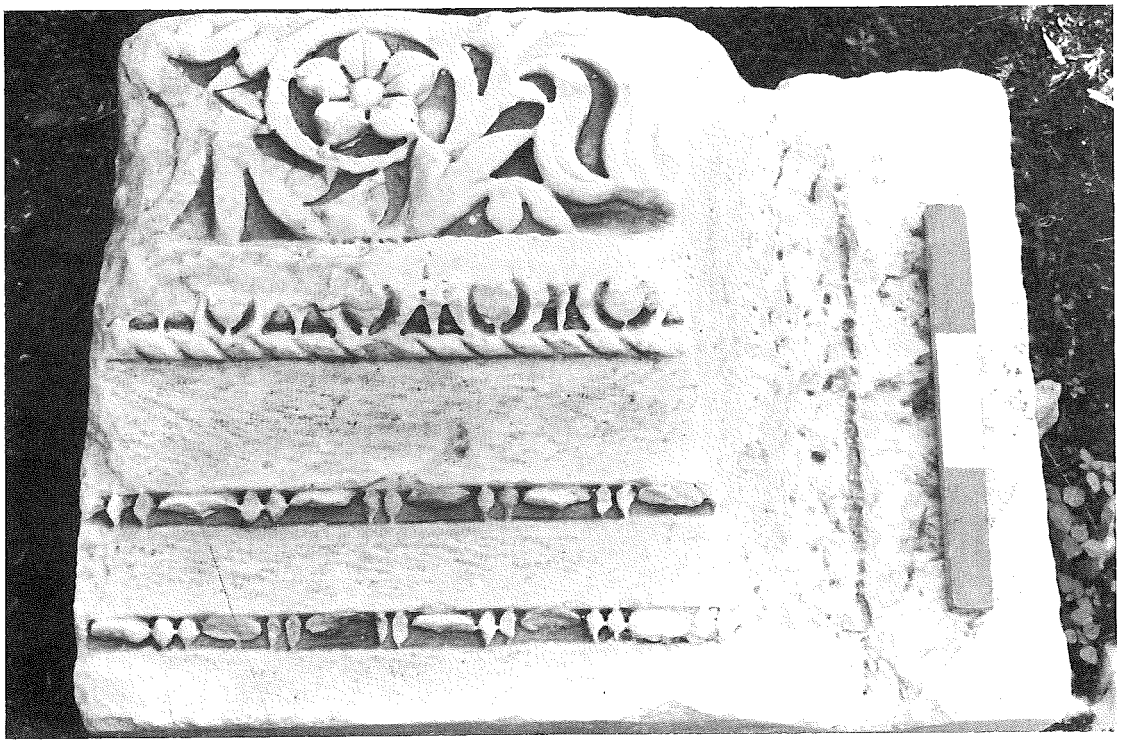

Fig.7. Protruding architrave-frieze of the lateral aisles.

6. Fragment of architrave-frieze (fig.7).
l of the decorated part 40 cm; l of the part joined with the wall 26 cm; h 55 cm; w 30 cm.
The ovolo is of the usual type with wide eggshell; the darts are sharply differentiated.
This fragment protruded from the wall of the lateral naves, as in a *scaenae frons*.

7. Fragment of architrave-frieze.
l 75 cm; h 52 cm (architrave 32 cm, frieze 20 cm).
Astragal with elongated beads, twisted rope typical of 2nd-3rd c. decoration. Ovolo damaged but evidently with wide eggshell and flat darts. Floral acanthus frieze. On left side 2 upright acanthus leaves are visible; a scroll develops to the right with a flower in the center.
In Asia Minor this type was common from the Trajanic/Hadrianic period onwards, and it appears at Severan Lepcis Magna.[22]

8. Fragment of fascies of architrave, same type but damaged.

9. Fragment of protruding architrave, frontal part preserved, decorated on 3 sides.
It could have formed the front side of the pieces just described.

10. Fragment of architrave.

11. Fragment of architrave.

12. Fragment of small tympanum with acanthus modillions and sima of curled palmettes (fig.8).
At the top the central modillion is preserved, covered by a curled palmette and surrounded by a frame of smaller ovolos; in the adjacent coffers only a few remains of leaves are visible. The sima began over a flat corona, from which it was divided by an astragal. It is difficult to tell whether the type exhibited curled and closed palmettes or palmettes with acanthus leaves (as commonly in Roman Palestine).
Possibly it decorated one of the niches in the walls where statues stood.

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22 For Asia Minor see V. Strocka, *Das Markttor von Milet* (Winckelmannsprogramm 128, Berlin 1981) fig.57 and S. Pulz, *Untersuchungen zur kaiserzeitlichen Bauornamentik von Didyma* (IstMitt. Beih. 35, Tübingen 1989) pls. 26-27; for a rather similar example from Severan Lepcis Magna see M. Floriani Squarciapino, *Sculture del Foro Severiano di Leptis Magna* (Roma 1974) pl. XC; it also occurs at the Facade of the Colossal Figures at Corinth (cf. R. Stillwell, *Corinth* I ii [Cambridge MA 1941] 69-71, figs. 46-47).

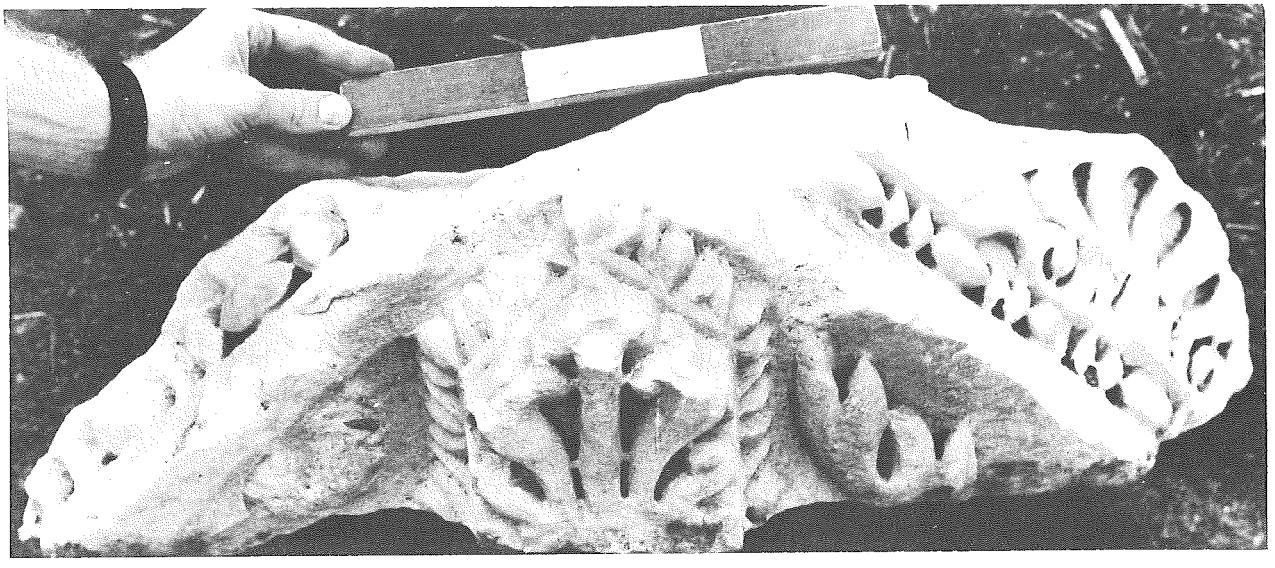

Fig.8. Tympanon.

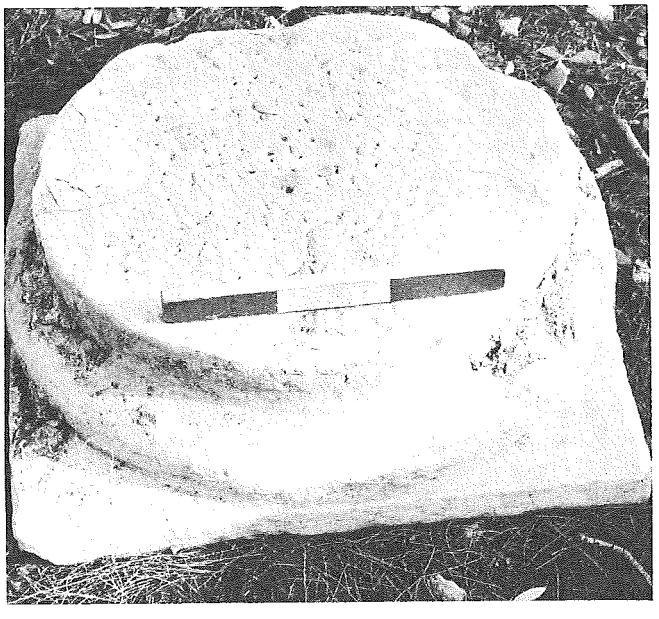

Fig.9. Attic-Ionic base, probably from the second storey.

13. Attic-Ionic base (fig.9)
d *c.*50 cm.

The items 5-13 seem to have derived from the upper storey, as is evident from their dimensions.

Architectural pieces less certainly attributable to the basilica

Those that follow are less certainly attributable to the Basilica, although the ceiling cassettes (no.16) are good candidates, since they are mentioned by Thiersch (supra n.13).

14. Relief of a frieze or a lintel.[23]
Oval medallions are created by vine scrolls, leaves and grapes; they are alternately horizontal and vertical.
In the horizontal medallion a seated individual is shown; in the vertical one Pan is shown.
This piece recalls the decoration on a reused lintel of local stone found at Eleutheropolis (Beth Guvrin).[24]

15. Frieze. Lost. See Hanauer.[25]
Acanthus scroll with hunting putti and an animal (lion?).

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23 IAA no.31.233; J. H. Iliffe, "A bust of a Pan," *QDAP* 3 (1934) 165-66, pl. LXVII.3.
24 Y. Dagan, M. Fischer and Y. Tsafrir, "An inscribed lintel from Bet Guvrin," *IEJ* 35 (1985) 28-34.
25 J. H. Hanauer, "Two busts from Caesarea," *PEFQSt* 1898, 159-60.

Fig.10. Large capital of main order (see also fig.3). Fig.11. Large figured corner capital of heart-shaped column of the main order.

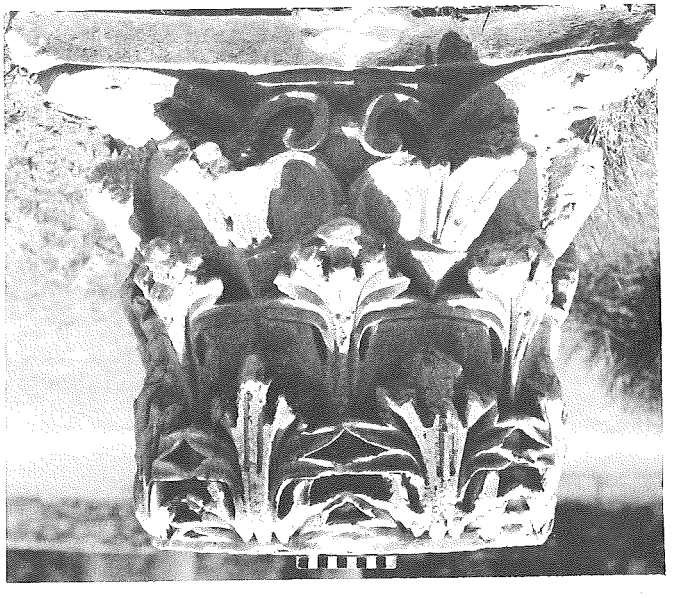

Fig.12. Small capital probably from the second storey. Fig.13. Small capital probably from the second storey or the upper gallery.

16. Ceiling coffers. Lost (?). Thiersch (supra n.13) pl. XI, 1-3.
A draped woman, a lion, and Hermes are shown.
These ceiling coffers may have formed part of the wall and ceiling decoration mentioned by Garstang, *PEFQSt* 1921, 15.

CORINTHIAN CAPITALS

A total of 25 Corinthian capitals have been found. They may be attributed to two main types, IIIDc and VAa and VEa, by my typology (supra n.1).

The largest capitals belong to types VAa and VEa (fig.10).[26]
h 80-91 cm (largest 98 cm); lower d *c.*60-63 cm. Differences in size are mainly due to their state of preservation. Their original height was from 90 to 95 cm.
They may be associated with the ground floor of the basilica. Some were figured capitals with eagles[27] and Medusas.
They are similar in size, shape and design to capitals from the basilica at Lepcis Magna[28] and from the Lepcis Quadrifrons[29] that are adorned with eagles.[30] At Sabratha too our type VE is quite common[31] and the marble is thought to have been imported from Proconnesos by itinerant *marmorarii*.[32] Our type VE is also found in the theater at Alexandria.[33] A group of similar capitals comes from Herakleia Pontica on the Black Sea.[34]

One of the capitals from Ascalon is of particular interest (fig.11). It seems to have decorated one of the heart-shaped corner pillars.[35] The part preserved perhaps belonged to the exterior decoration, since it is not curved. This capital is decorated with an eagle, like one at Lepcis Magna.[36]

The smaller capitals (fig.12) belong to type IIIDc.
av. h 60 cm; lower d *c.*40 cm.
They typify the trend developed by artists from Aphrodisias in the mid 2nd c. This is the most popular type of marble capital in Roman Palestine. Eleven examples from Caesarea were analysed and all found to come from the same outcrop in the Marmara quarry.[37]

Some other capitals belong to types IIIDb and IVBb (fig.13). Their size is similar to the preceding group. Perhaps they were used in the upper storey of the basilica or in an adjacent building.

Overall the capitals show clear links with examples from North Africa and Asia Minor in the second half of the 2nd and early 3rd centuries. The marble workshops of Asia Minor seem to have been providing marble elements for both North Africa and the Near East, although we cannot exclude the possibility that somewhere in the SE part of the Mediterranean there was a regional or branch workshop.

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26 One of them is illustrated in Garstang, *PEFQSt* 1924, fig. 2, cf. pl. III.
27 M. L. Fischer, "Figured capitals in Roman Palestine. Marble imports and local stones: some aspects of "imperial" and "provincial" art," *AA* 1991, 119-44.
28 R. Bartoccini, *AfrIt* 1 (1927) 66 fig.12.
29 R. Bartoccini, *AfrIt* 4 (1931) 52 fig.20; cf. also E. von Mercklin, *Antike Figuralkapitelle* (Berlin 1963) nos. 561-65.
30 von Mercklin 231 no.564, figs. 1066-73.
31 F. Tomasello, *QuadArchLib* 13 (1983) 89 fig.3, compared with an example from Side (p.96, n.24, figs. 4-5).
32 Tomasello (supra n.31) 97 n.27.
33 K. Michalowski, *Alexandria* (Warsaw 1970) pl.69.
34 W. Hoepfner, *Herakleia Pontike* (Wien 1966) 87-88 fig.24. He stresses the connection between the design at Herakleia and the Severan buildings of Lepcis and Sabratha.
35 This suggestion was made by A. Hoffmann, to whom I am most grateful for his invaluable help and advice throughout.
36 von Mercklin (supra n.29) fig.1067.
37 M. L. Fischer, M. Magaritz and Z. Pearl, "Isotopic and artistic analysis of Corinthian capitals from Caesarea Maritima," *Caesarea Papers* (JRA Suppl.5, 1992) 219-20.

FIGURED PILASTERS

Four figured pilasters have attracted attention from various scholars,[38] and they warrant further discussion here.

A. Pilaster, the best preserved of the four. Figs. 14a-d and 15.
h 3.60 m, breadth 0.90 m, d (width) 0.70 m.
A hole and channel are visible on its upper rectangular surface (fig.14c), probably evidence of how lead was introduced in order to tie the block to a piece above. The back is roughly smoothed. The lateral sides (fig.14b) are divided into 3 strips. The strip close to the front (27 cm wide) is finely smoothed except for the lowest 60 cm where the surface was left slightly pointed. This part matches the height of the projecting pedestal (see below). The middle strip (28 cm wide) is roughly worked with a pointed chisel. The back strip (15 cm wide) is some 2 cm higher than the other two strips and is roughly smoothed like the second strip. The division of the lateral surfaces reflects the manner in which the pilaster was placed in its architectural frame.
The front surface is decorated with a sculpture in high relief (fig.14a). Above, it is framed by a projecting cornice (18 cm high); below is a pedestal (57 cm high). The sculptures are preserved to a height of *c.*2.62 m. They comprise a winged Nike standing barefoot on a globe supported by a kneeling Atlas. The whole group stands on a pedestal which projects 26 cm beyond the rest of the piece and comprises a dado 23 cm high with linear base at the bottom and cornice 56 cm high at the top.
The winged victory is 2.08 m high including the cornice where the remains of a *polos* are visible. Her face is completely mutilated. Her right leg is slightly advanced. With her left hand she lifts up her *peplos*. Her right hand, of which only the upper arm is preserved, probably held a laurel wreath at the level of the cornice. Her *peplos* is tied by a girdle below the breasts. The artist tried to convey the illusion of the *peplos* fluttering as she landed on the globe by carving lines into the marble and by accentuating her anatomy and the plasticity of the *peplos*. Thus the roundness of her abdomen and navel are shown between the folds. The grasping of the peplos is an archaistic feature not normally found on representations of Nikai. This motif was evidently added by our artist, since no connection is created between the folds falling alongside the legs and those of the grasped portion of the *peplos*. Drill marks are visible although in places attempts were made to remove them.
The kneeling Atlas bearing the globe (fig.14d) has strongly emphasized anatomical features. The globe is flattened by his head as if to accentuate the heavy burden. The design recalls that of Atlas Farnese[39] but it has something in common with the Atlas supporting the zodiac in a sculpture in the Villa Albani,[40] or with one on the *pulpitum* of the theater of Dionysos at Athens.[41] It also resembles some kneeling barbarians and telamons.[42]
Victories holding a wreath and landing on a globe are very popular in Roman art, but Victory standing on a globe supported by an Atlas is quite rare.[43]

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38 Such as S. Reinach, *Revue des Etudes Juives* 16 (1888) 24 pl.A and id., *RSGR* II 1, 389, no.4; *LIMC* V (1990) s.v. Isis, 773, no. 175; P. R. Diplock, "The date of Askalon's sculptured panels and an identification of Caesarea statues," *PEQ* 103 (1971) 13-16 and id., "Further commentaries on "An identification of the Caesarea statues"," *PEQ* 103 (1973) 165-66; R. M. Schneider, *Bunte Barbaren* (Worms 1986) 45-46, pl. 21.4; Wenning (supra n.11).

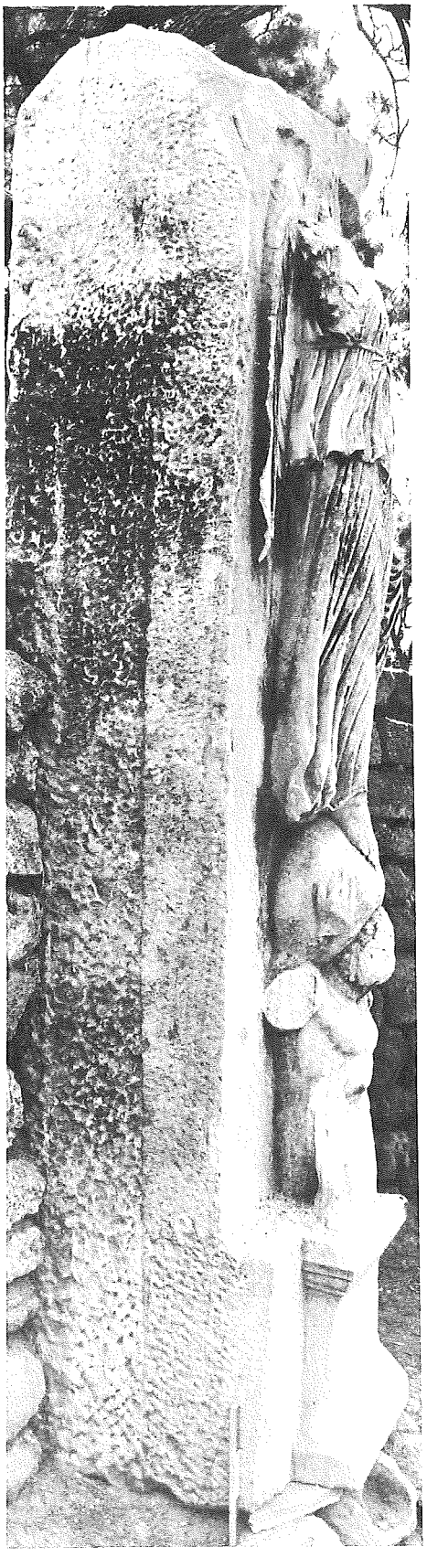
39 *LIMC* III 1, s.v. Atlas *B, nos. 32-45, 47a (the Ascalon Atlas); Schneider (supra n.38) 47, pl.20.

40 Cf. *LIMC* III.1. s.v. Atlas no.37. For an example from Apamea see J. C. Balty, *JRS* 78 (1988) 95 pl. XI 3.

41 *Dar.Sag.* I 1, s.v. Atlas, fig.609; for copies of this type see *Museo Nazionale Romano. Le sculture* I.7 (Roma 1984) 361-63, nos. XI 20-22.

42 Like those from the theater at Caesarea, cf. A. Frova, *Scavi di Caesarea Maritima* (Milano 1965) 205-6, figs. 260-61.

43 Schneider (supra n.38) 45-50, treats the Ascalon piece as a model for reconstructing other fragments showing Atlas supporting a globe. For another example from Palestine see an inscribed relief from the High Level Aqueduct at Caesarea (fig.22) reconstructed by J. Olami and J. Ringel, *IEJ* 25 (1975) 148-50, fig.IV B, pl.3. In that case a Victory stands on a globe supported by an Atlas and she lifts a medallion crowned by an aedicula with an eagle inside. Not all of these details are now visible on the piece.



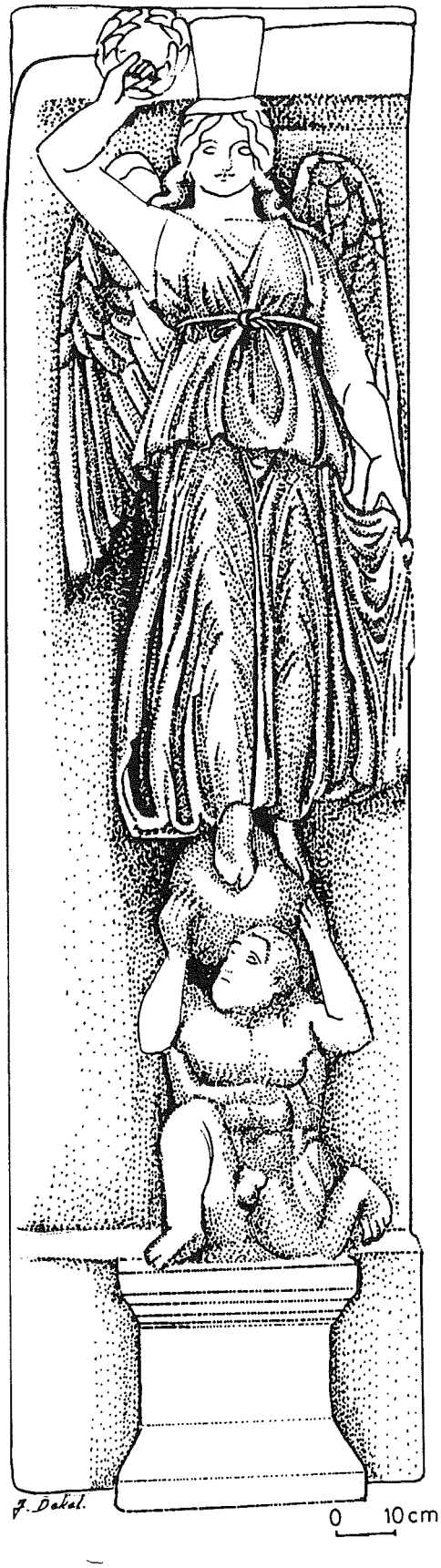
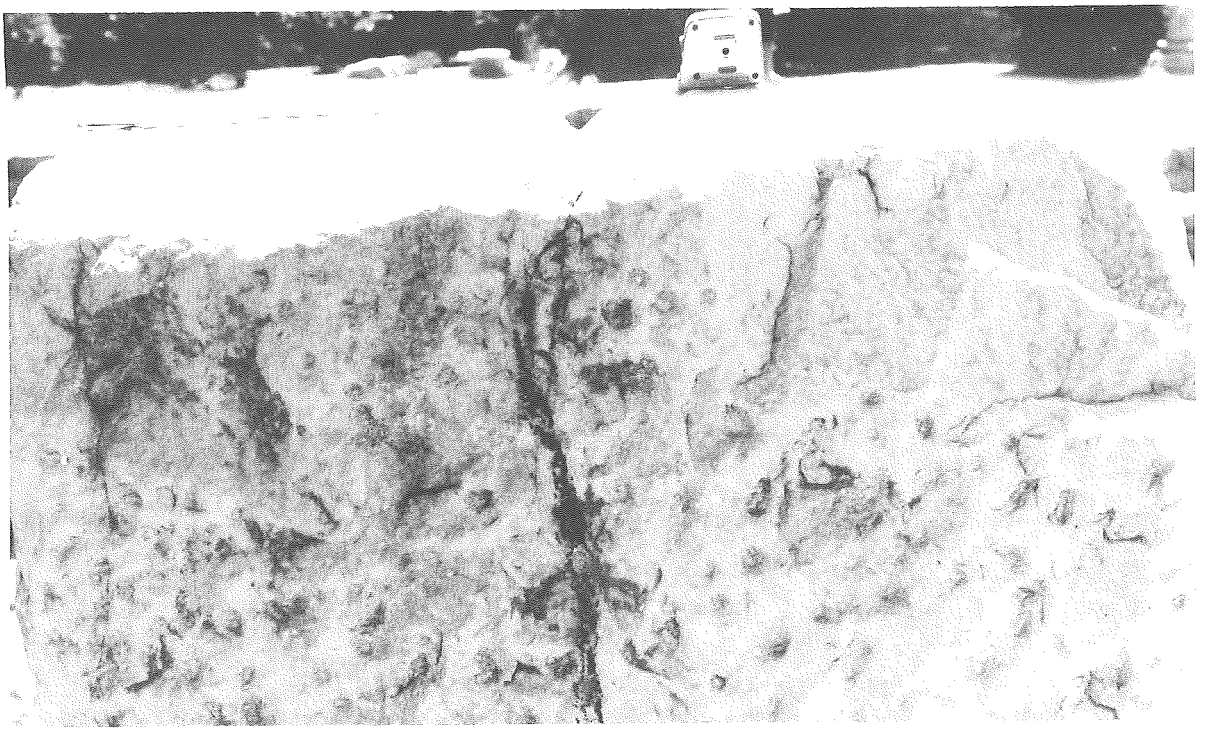


Fig.14a (left). Figured pilaster A, showing front. Fig.14b. Same, side. Fig.15 (right). Drawing.



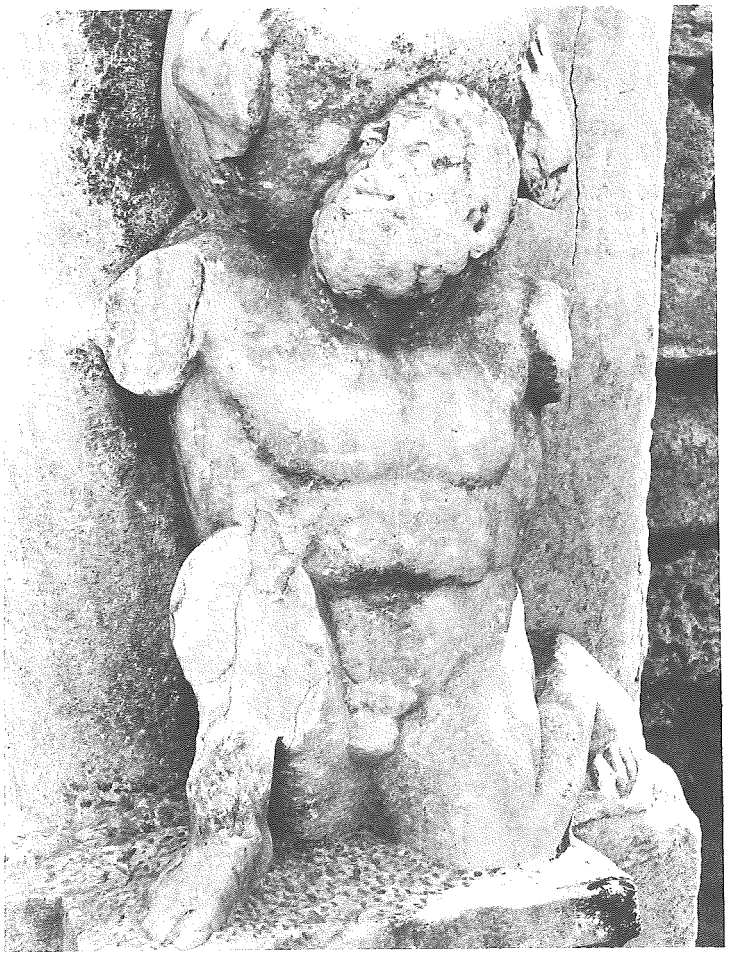
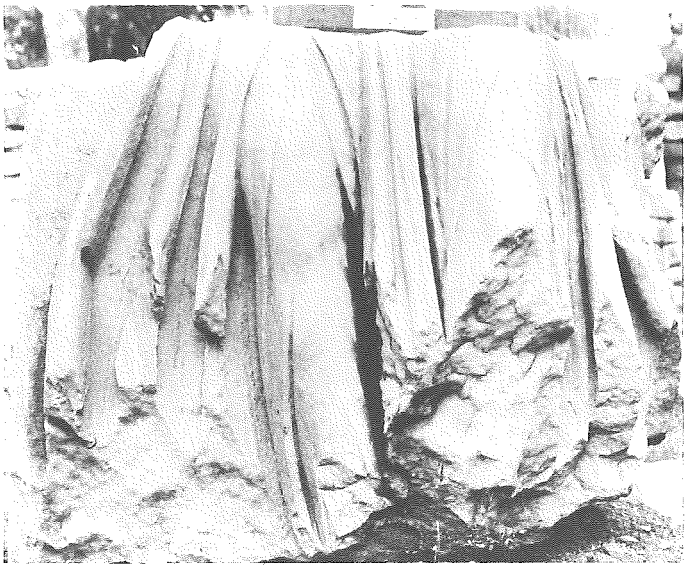


Fig.14b (above). Figured pilaster A, upper part of side. Fig. 14c (below). Detail of Atlas.



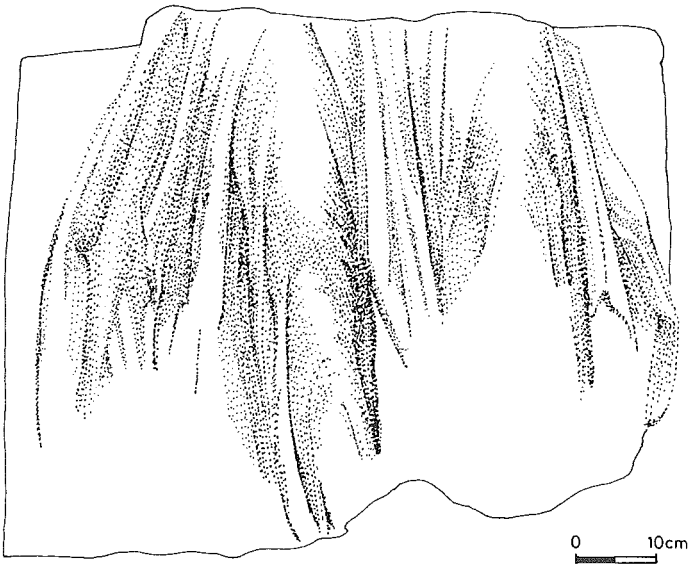


Fig.16 (left). Figured pilaster B. Fig.17. Drawing of figured pilaster B.

B. Fragment of a pilaster similar to A above (figs. 16-17).
Only one fragment (h 70 cm) is preserved. It shows the area above and below the knees of a Victory. She seems to be resting her right leg while the left leg is placed slightly forward. This difference from piece A should be significant when considering its original placement. Again, Victory probably lifted her *peplos* with her left hand.

C. Pilaster of the same kind as piece A but only a little more than half is preserved (figs. 18-19). Its shape, cornice and treatment of the lateral sides and upper surface conform to those of piece A.
h 2.28m; breadth 90 cm; d 60 cm.
The sculptured side represents a winged Victory. Her face is damaged. Two long locks descend from her shoulder towards her breasts. She wears a *polos* which reaches the upper edge of the cornice. In her right hand she holds a palm branch. A small socket to support the hand with the palm branch remains. Her left arm (remains of the forearm) points upwards, suggesting that it held a wreath (some traces at the upper right corner of the cornice may belong to a wreath). Traces of her right leg and the smooth pointed surface behind her left leg, which was probably extended forwards, survive, as well as traces of a round feature, probably a globe.
She is shown at the moment of alighting on the globe. Her *peplos* has a long *kolpos* drawn just below the breasts by a wide girdle tied in the middle. The lateral folds flutter in the breeze and reveal the contour of her body. The folds around the breasts and the abdomen are carved deeply and schematically, differing from the treatment of those on piece A.
Victory standing on a globe and holding a palm branch and wreath belongs to a type frequently copied in Roman art following a type that came to Rome with Augustus after the battle of Actium. The palm symbolized peace, the wreath the crowning of the victor.[44] Our Victory differs from the standard type in having the palm in her right and wreath in her left. Perhaps this was determined by the design of this particular building and its overall decorative program.

D. Belongs to the same type as pieces A-C (figs. 20a-c and 21)
Preserved h 1.07 m (less than one third of the original height). Its width and the working of the lateral sides resemble pieces A-C.
Two figures are carved on the front. The main figure is a frontal woman resembling korai of the Caryatid type. She wears a *polos* and a diadem with central emblem. On her *polos* some attributes of Isis can be discerned: crowns of stars with crescent moon, and ears of wheat. It is not clear if the *polos* was turriform. She wears a short-sleeved *chiton* and robe ending in tassles which is tied between the breast by a girdle in

44 T. Hölscher, *Victoria Romana* (Mainz 1967) passim.

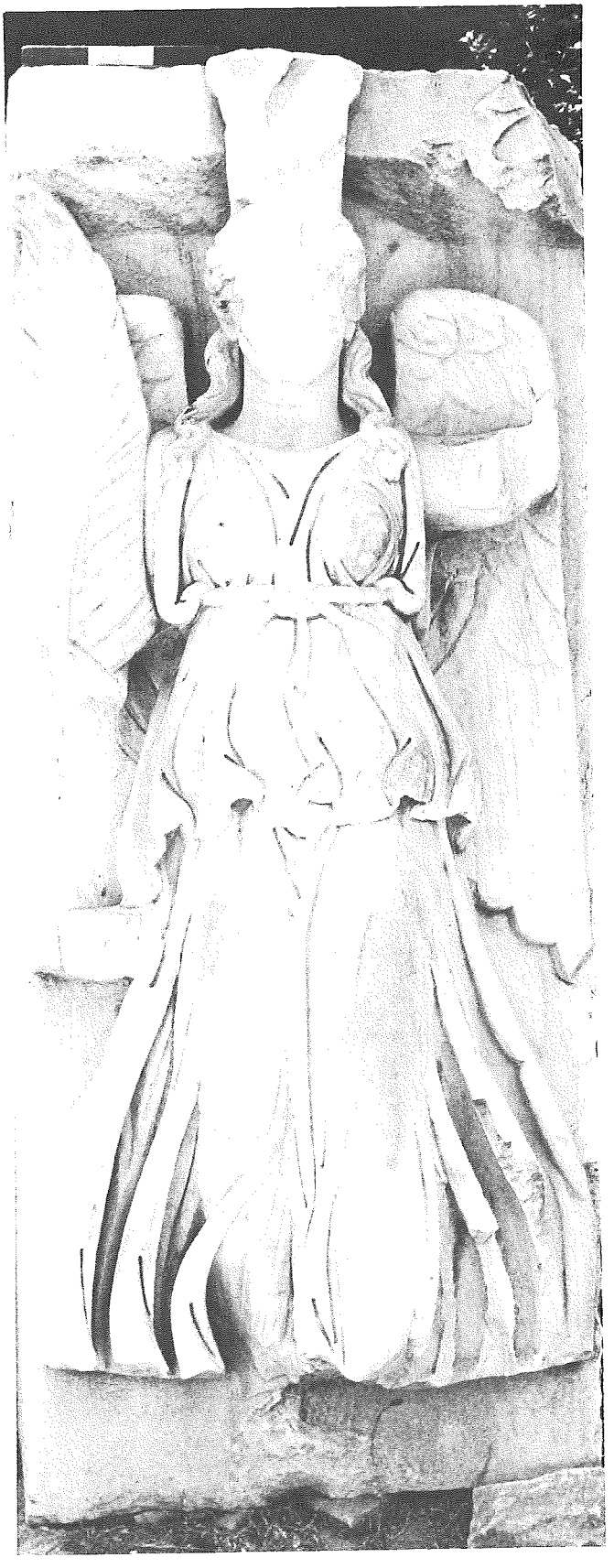


Fig.18. Figured pilaster C.

Fig.19. Drawing of figured pilaster C.

an Isiac knot.[45] Her hair is carefully combed, framing her forehead and her oval face. Two long corkscrew curls fall upon her shoulders, as is usual. Her hands are not preserved, but her right hand was probably slightly advanced. She was probably shown as Tyche-Fortuna or as Isis-Tyche. This type is known from other pieces and from inscriptions.[46] If so, she probably held a cornucopia or a rudder.
Behind her and to her right is a second figure, a standing boy. He is in three-quarters' pose, with bare right shoulder pushed forwards. He wears the *himation* which he holds with his right hand. Face and hand are those of a child. His locks are framed by a diadem with central emblem of 5-pointed star (somewhat damaged). A few locks descend to the temple without covering his ear. This small figure has almost always been identified as Horus/Harpokrates, the son of Isis, but since he lacks any characteristics of that figure he may instead represent a priest of Sarapis or a worshipper.[47] On this, see the following Excursus by A. Krug. In fact a divinity with a worshipper or priest was quite common in eastern art, particularly at Palmyra and Dura Europos in the 2nd-3rd c. The deities are central and the other figures smaller and to one side, sometimes slightly recessed.[48] The cult of Isis was quite popular in Roman Palestine, and we know that Ascalon was an important place of her worship.[49]

EXCURSUS: A PRIEST OF SARAPIS AT ASCALON? *by Antje Krug*

This excursus will propose a new interpretation of the male figure accompanying Isis on the above-mentioned pilaster. First, a few comments on the depiction of Isis are in order. The representation shows some divergences from the canonical Isis type, the reason for which will be suggested below. The pose is rather like a pillar, with rigidly symmetrical dress and rather tall *polos*. The composition did not leave much room for attributes. Since her hands are missing the attributes which they held are unknown. Most frequently Isis-Tyche held cornucopiae in her left and a rudder in her right hand.[50] In this instance her left arm, which hangs down more or less vertically, probably held a *situla*, as there are no traces of a *cornucopia*. Often too Isis held a *sistrum* raised in front or to the side. In this case her right arm is lowered and slightly bent in front of her hip and may have grasped a *sistrum* or a rudder, the blade of which might have rested against her right side.

The small male figure depicted behind and above the right shoulder of Isis is the main focus of this note. He wears a himation whose plain folds are draped around his body and over his left shoulder. The surface is rather worn and it is unclear if he is wearing a tunic or chiton beneath. Only his right leg is visible. His left arm disappears behind the shoulder of Isis. His right arm grasps the rim of the garment and perhaps holds a scroll as well. His face is round and chubby, with high forehead and short nose.[51] The head is framed by a fillet with a round emblem at the center. Some short curls emerge on the temples.

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45 On Isis dress see E. J. Walters, *Attic grave reliefs that represent women in the dress of Isis* (Hesperia Suppl. XXII, Princeton NJ 1988), and J. Eingartner, *Isis und ihre Dienerinnen in der Kunst der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Mnemosyne Suppl., Leiden 1991).

46 For an inscription mentioning Isi-Tyche, see Roscher, *Lexikon Mythologie* I 2 (1886-90) 1543-44; for artistic representations see *DarSag.* III 1 (1900) s.v. Isis (G. Lafaye), 577-79 fig.4095 (attributes); cf. II 2 (1896) s.v. Fortuna, 1273, fig.3242, holding in her left hand a *cornucopia*.

47 Wenning (supra n.11) queried whether the pair may presented Julia Domna and Caracalla.

48 For Palmyrene representations of this kind see M. A. R. Colledge, *The art of Palmyra* (London 1976) 68, fig.83; for cult reliefs from Dura Europos see M. Rostovtzeff *et al.*, *The excavations at Dura-Europos. Preliminary report of the seventh and eighth seasons...*" (New Haven 1939) 292-302, pl. XXXVII.

49 "Invocation of Isis", *POxy* XI, no.1380, 190, cols. V-VI, ll. 93-99. See also a terracotta bust representing Isis-Tyche from Ascalon (D. Flusser, "Gods, personificatinos and sea-monsters," *Sefunim* 3 [1969-71] 29, pl. IV.7 [h 14 cm]).

50 LIMC V (1990) s.v. Isis, 794, pl. 521-22 (Tran Tam Tinh).

51 A dark line running across the right cheek is a vein in the marble.

This figure was always identified as Horus/Harpokrates (see above, n.47) although Watzinger already noted its portrait-like features.[52] Recently R. Wenning has made a case for the juvenile Caracalla (with Julia Domna in the guise of Isis).[53] He is cautious about attributing the figure to one of the known portrait types of Caracalla because of its worn condition and rather indefinite features. Certainly the figure lacks the traditional attributes of Horus/Harpokrates (the Horus 'lock', the forefinger touching the lips), and he wears contemporary male costume and hair style. There is one additional detail that may assist the figure's identification, the round emblem on the fillet with central knob displaying faint traces of rays. This is best identified as the star-shaped emblem of priests of Sarapis. Goette recently discussed a series of male portraits with head framed by a fillet bearing a star in its center, and argued convincingly that they represent priests of Sarapis, particularly the high-ranking Neokoroi. [54] Most of the examples listed by Goette come from Egypt but there are some others.

The identification with Harpocrates/Horus was made particularly because of the figure's small and childlike proportions, but those are due primarily to the constraints of the composition as a whole. The majestic goddess dominates the center of the composition and little space is left for her attributes, while for a second figure the only spaces available are the triangular niches above her shoulders. The sculptor made the best use of this limited space by placing our small figure slightly behind the goddess' shoulder and by emphasizing his head and diadem while neglecting his feet and lower body. The proportions of the second figure also seem to be the result of a certain clumsiness by the sculptor. It seems that in general for these pilasters the sculptors followed models but that when in places they departed from the models difficulties resulted. Thus the presumed rudder is not given sufficient space while the sistrum is atypically placed in the goddess' right hand which is not in its normal pose. Also, whereas the folds of Isis' garment are deeply cut, those of the male figure are plain and flat, with insufficient contrast of light and shade.

The youth with the priest's fillet, depicted in an important place next to the goddess within the sculptural decoration of the basilica, may be the donor who commissioned some of the work or was connected with the construction or dedication of the structure as a whole. This suggestion is not contradicted by the youthful appearance of the figure, since Goette's list includes another who seems only just to have emerged from childhood.[55] Nor would it be unusual for a donor's portrait to be placed close to his dedication. We find portraits of donors and even of their families in a number of public buildings such as the nymphaeum of Herodes Atticus or the baths of Perge.[56] It is also common for deities and mortals to appear together in the same dedicatory scene. A votive relief from the Capitol hill in Rome shows the donor side by side by Demeter-Isis, Sarapis, Harpocrates and Kore-Tyche, all of them at the same scale.[57] From Dura Europos comes a scene with deities symmetrically flanked by donors and victories of the same size, yet the donor is placed at the very edge, extending slightly beyond the frame. The inscription indicates that the donor came from Palmyra and had embellished the sanctuary with a chapel.[58] One of the main characteristics of Palmyrene funerary reliefs is the differentiation of figures by size according to their relative importance. In some a deceased woman is shown with busts or half-figures of her children; their small scale helps to emphas-

52 C. Watzinger, *Denkmäler Palästinas* II (Leipzig 1935) 98.
53 Supra n.11, 506-10.
54 H. R. Goette, "Kaiserzeitliche Bildnisse von Sarapis-Priestern," *MittKairo* 45 (1989) 173-86.
55 Goette (supra n.54) pl.15 (Louvre MA 3169).
56 R. Bol, *Das Statuenprogramm des Herodes-Atticus-Nymphaeums* (Ol.Forsch. 15, Berlin 1984) 84-87, with further examples and references.
57 Th. Kraus, "Alexandrinische Triaden in der römischen Kaiserzeit," *MittKairo* 11 (1963) 97-105.
58 Colledge (supra n.48) 227 fig.146.

Fig.20a. Figured pilaster D, frontal view.

Fig.20b. Same, side view.

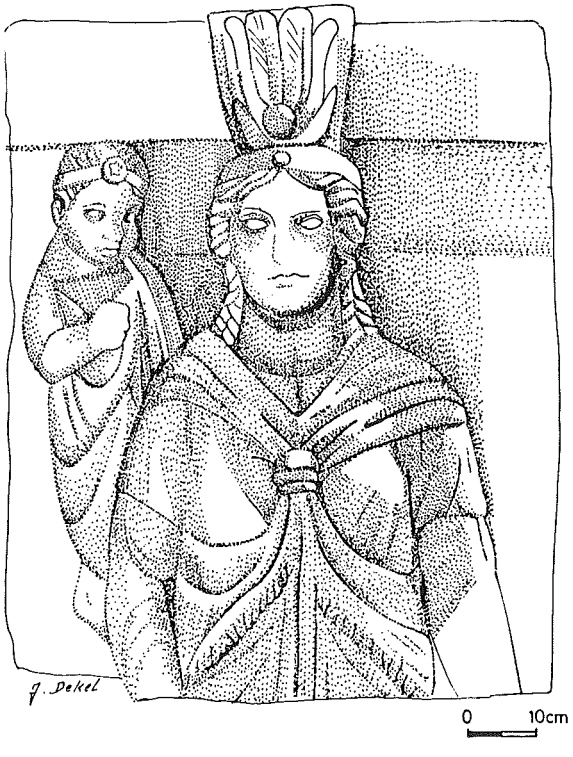

Fig.21. Drawing of figured pilaster D.

Fig.20c. Same, detail of "child".

ize the woman's role as a mother, and she is invariably shown young and beautiful.[59] The attempt to achieve a balanced composition by giving an equal height to the heads produces Palmyrene banqueting scenes where the main figure, a reclining man fills almost the entire height while the seated lady accompanying him is of the same height, and so at a much smaller scale.[60] On our piece, the human figure could not have been shown full-size, so the sculptor placed him at a reduced scale beside and behind Isis-Tyche after modifying the common prototype of the goddess appropriately. If the human figure was indeed as young as suggested by the portrait, the composition indeed follows closely the example of Palmyrene art, whereas the prototype for the whole scene draws upon Roman imperial art. Finally, if we are correct in arguing for the inclusion here of a local donor, it follows that the piece was carved locally rather than imported from Asia Minor as a finished carving.

The resemblance between this portrait and two early portrait types of Caracalla should be discussed. Caracalla's "1. Thronfolgertypus" is characterized by rather long curls and childlike features, and has been dated *c.*196-204.[61] The still youthful but more adult "2. Thronfolgertypus" is dated *c.*208.[62] The short, cap-like curls of our figure are closer to the second Caracallan type, but nothing more precise can be said, as Wenning correctly noted.[63] He concluded that the resemblance was more general, even of a retrospective nature. Thus, we should accept the portrait as a private portrait following the model established by the imperial family and connected to the second Caracallan type. That provides a *terminus ante quem non* for the carving of this pilaster, and perhaps of the Basilica as a whole. Finally, if our identification of a priest of Sarapis is correct, it would imply the existence at Ascalon of a Sarapeion[64] and of sculptured representations of Sarapis in the city. Possibly another pilaster of the series depicted Sarapis as its main deity.

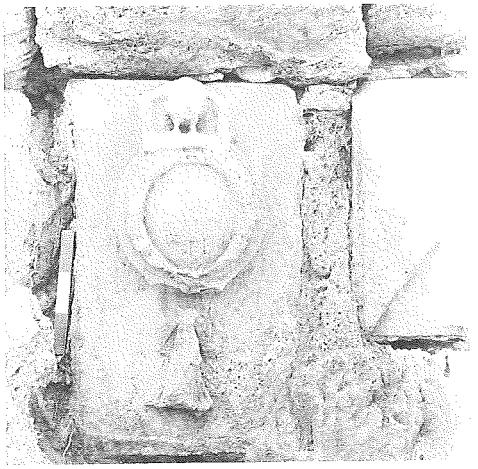

Fig.22. Relief and inscription from High-level aqueduct of Caesarea (Tel Mevorakh).

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59 For Palmyrene representations of this kind see Colledge (supra n.48) 68 fig.83; K. Parlasca, *Syrische Grabreliefs hellenistischer und römischer Zeit. Fundgruppen und Probleme* (Mainz 1981) 15, pl.17.2; K. Tanabe (ed.), *Memoirs of the Ancient Orient Museum* I: *Sculptures of Palmyra* (Tokyo 1986) nos. 335-36; for cult reliefs see P. Collart and J. Vicari, *Le sanctuaire de Baalshamin à Palmyre* (Rome 1969) 222, pl. CVIII.1; H. Ingholt, *Studier over Palmyrensk Skulptur* (Kobenhavn 1928) 75-77, PS 46, pl. XIV.2, A.D. 184); for Dura-Europos cult reliefs see Rostovtzeff (supra n.48) 292-302, pl. XXXVII, and A. Perkins, *The art of Dura-Europos* (Oxford 1973).

60 Colledge (supra n.48) figs. 61-62.

61 K. Fittschen, P. Zanker, *Katalog der römischen Porträts in den Capitolinischen Museen und den anderen kommunalen Sammlungen der Stadt Rom* 1: Kaiser- und Prizenbildnisse (Mainz 1985) 86-87.

62 Fittschen and Zanker (supra n.61) 88-89.

63 Supra n.11, 507.

64 For a tentative location of a temple of Sarapis in the neighbourhood of Ascalon, see Avi-Yonah, *Gazetteer* 51 s.v. Diocletianupolis, identified with Kh. esh Sheraf.

The figured pilasters in the context of Hellenistic and Roman architecture (M.F.)

An attempt to understand the full meaning of the 4 figured pilasters (3 depicting Victories, one depicting Isis-Tyche and a priest of Sarapis) is hampered by the facts that only one pilaster is completely preserved and their position in the building is not precisely known. The 3 pilasters with Victories seem to have imperial connotations, connected with the concept of the *oikoumene*. The fourth pilaster, however, has more of a local reference, to a civic building falling under the protection of a Tyche. Figured pilasters in Roman architecture may be divided into two groups, the first being freestanding pilasters or piers (*Pfeilerfiguren*), the second being true pilasters joined to the adjacent walls.[65] Most belong to the first category. There are relatively few figured pilasters of the second type.[66] As parallels for ours, we may note panels with monumental figures attached to the upper parapet of the Monument of C. Memmius at Ephesos;[67] there, caryatids are thought to symbolize the peoples of Asia Minor defeated by the Romans.[68] Freestanding figured pilasters on the upper storeys of façades are found in the Domitianerterrasse at Ephesos and on the Facade of the Colossal Figures at Corinth. The first was a huge artificial platform for a temple, altar and statue of the Emperor, as part of the imperial cult.[69] The terrace was supported by Atlantes and Caryatids representing Oriental divinities, interpreted as a reference to Roman victory over Oriental peoples. The second, at Corinth, also features figured pilasters with Oriental divinities who seem to represent defeated peoples.[70] The closest parallels for the Ascalon pilasters, however, are to be found in the Severan basilica at Lepcis Magna.[71] Nine pilasters have been found, about 1.5 m high, representing caryatids who differ only in the position of their hands. Shared features in the design of the Lepcis and Ascalon capitals and of other architectural pieces from both sites point towards their common origin. In this regard the marble analysis of pieces from Ascalon (see below) is relevant. Recent work on marble from Lepcis Magna suggests that many items are of Proconnesian and Thasian marble.[72]

Other sculptures from Ascalon

Sculptures came from the vicinity of the Basilica even before the excavations of the Palestine Fund. Lady Stanhope discovered an over-lifesize cuirassed statue of an emperor. It was said to have been found in the Temple of Astarte, whose precise site is unknown. This statue survives only in drawings made by her physician Dr Charles Lewis Meryon[73] since Lady Stanhope ordered the statue destroyed. The piece had a cloak (*paludamentum*) on the left shoulder. Griffins flanked a central object (incense-burner or candelabrum?). They were partially covered by the belt (*cingulum*) knotted in front and with its ends looped beneath at left and right. Shoulder straps (*epomides*) with figured decoration on the ends and a gorgoneion with aegis (?) decorated the chest. Below the navel is a stylized acanthus leaf, two short rows of tassels (*pteryges*), and leather straps covering the tunic. A decorated tree-trunk forms a

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65 H. Büsing, *Die griechische Halbsäule* (Wiesbaden 1970) 56-63, with English terminology in J. MacKenzie, *The architecture of Petra* (Oxford 1990).

66 For a list see L. Guerrini, *ArchCl* 13 (1961) 61-63, n.6.

67 A. Bammer, W. Alzinger, *Forschungen in Ephesos* VII (Wien 1971) 67-68, figs. 54-55.

68 A. Bammer, *Architektur und Gesellschaft in der Antike* (Wien 1974) 113-16.

69 A. Bammer, *ÖJh* 52 (1978-80) 6790, figs. 14-15.

70 R. Stillwell, *Corinth* I (II) (1941) 86, figs. 50-51, pls. II and IV, dated to the mid 2nd c., but for an Augustan dating of many of the elements, with their reuse in the 2nd c., see H. von Hesberg, *AthMitt* 98 (1983) 232-38.

71 J. B. Ward-Perkins, *PBSR* 20 (1952) 120, PLS. XXV-VI; Floriani Squarciapino (supra n.22) 155-63, pls. LXXVI-IX.

72 H. M. Walda and S. Walker, *Libyan Studies* 19 (1988) 55-59.

73 Meryon (supra n.12) 161.

support next to the left leg. This type of statue appears commonly from the time of Trajan, but this example is more likely to be attributed to a statue of Septimius Severus.[74] Cuirassed statues of emperors often decorated buildings dedicated to their cult, and basilicas could have qualified in this regard. We may note also that Garstang reported a sandalled foot and arm of a colossal statue found in the shrine in the E nave of the basilica (the foot measured 98 cm from heel to toe, and was 39 cm high). It should belong to a different statue from the cuirassed statue under discussion, since the latter was illustrated as barefooted by Dr. Meryon.[75]

Also prior to the British excavations and evidently in the area of the basilica were found some of the figured pilasters,[76] a statue (now lost) that seems to have been a copy of the Apollo Lykeios type,[77] a torso of Apollo or Dionysus,[78] and a head of Herakles that should be a copy of the Herakles Farnese.[79] There is also a statue of Hermes, with winged cap, sandals, caduceus against his left arm, and purse in his right hand; this too is a type that appears frequently in Roman copies.[80]

Garstang also mentioned the discovery of two statuettes in the area between the basilica and the 'curia', in a building with marble-revetted walls, niches and several fragments of statues.[81] One of the statuettes is a Crouching Aphrodite, found in the area of the basilica (original ht *c.*50 cm), with some traces of a figure (Eros?) joined to her. It seems to be a copy of an original created by Doidalsas of Bithynia (*c.*250 B.C.), which became a very popular representation of the goddess.[82] Our piece is the more hybrid version of the type, combining the crouching pose with the hair binding of the Anadyomene type. Our piece appears to be an imitation of the crouching type made in about the late 2nd c. C.E.

A number of other sculptural pieces from Ascalon have no known provenance and will not be included here.

Reconstruction of the basilica

Most if not all of the items described above probably belonged to the building excavated by Garstang in 1920-21. Garstang's excavations produced remains of different periods, which may be summarized as follows: an early (Hellenistic?) phase was followed by Herodian building, then a Roman imperial phase, and Byzantine alterations. The main elements found by Garstang comprise a semicircular apsidal hall with tiers of seats (diam. 13.7 m) and two

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74 For its workmanship, which seems to be typical of work of western Asia Minor of the Severan period, see K. Stemmer, *Untersuchungen zu Typologie, Chronologie und Ikonographie der Panzerstatuen* (Berlin 1978) 67, type V 21, pl. 42.3. A similar torso has been unearthed at Scythopolis. Other fragments of cuirassed statues are known from Caesarea, Eleutheropolis and Samaria-Sebaste.

75 As has been correctly pointed out by Wenning (supra n.11) 500 n.8.

76 Reinach, *RSGR* II, 389 NO.4.

77 Reinach, *RSGR* II, 1, 96, no.2.

78 Thiersch (supra n.13) pl. XIV, 1-2; The head, arms and legs are missing. The weight probably rested on the left leg, with the right leg bent. Two locks fall on the shoulders, and parallel tresses cover the nape of the neck.

79 Thiersch (supra n.13) pl. XV, 4-5. The head was turned to the left; it had short curly hair and beard.

80 Ht 85 cm. See C. Vermeule and K. Anderson, "Greek and Roman sculpture in the Holy Land," *Burlington Magazine* 123 no. 934 (1981) 7-19. For the type cf. *LIMC* V.2, 250, no. 621 272-82 nos. 915, 918a, 972, 974d, etc.

81 Garstang 1922 (supra n.14) 117: "portions of a giant statue presumed to be that of Herod, another of Apollo ..." and a "draped woman leaning sideways".

82 For the type see D. M. Brinkerhoff, *Hellenistic statues of Aphrodite. Studies in the history of their stylistic development* (New York 1978) 35, and doubts expressed by B. Ridgway, *Roman copies of Greek sculpture: the problem of the originals* (Ann Arbor 1984) 23 and her *Hellenistic sculpture* I. *The styles of circa 331-200 B.C.* (Bristol 1990) 230-32, pl. 112.

adjacent rooms; a rectangular building (91 x 37 m) which he termed the "peristyle" but which in fact was a building with three aisles; and a shrine located in the eastern aisle. The main building is oriented N-S with the apse at the S. Entrances connected the main building with the adjacent structures. At least one entrance is found in the wall of the apse facing towards the "peristyle". The "peristyle" and apse may be identified as a basilica and curia, a common pairing in Roman town centers often forming part of the Forum.[83]

Both Garstang and Diplock regarded these remains as part of the *peristyla* erected by Herod at Ascalon as mentioned by Josephus (*BJ* 1. 422; *Ant.* 15. 328-30). At first Garstang considered the structure a *Tychaeum* but subsequently defined it as the peristyle given by Herod with Curia added later.[84] Their Herodian dating was influenced by the discovery of two inscriptions dating to the 1st c. C.E.[85] Watzinger was the first to date the main structure to the late Antonine period, and identifying it as a roofed basilica and apse associated with the imperial cult.[86] Our study of the Corinthian capitals[87] suggested a Severan date, and that date is supported by other architectural details and some of the sculptures as discussed above.

In the absence of renewed excavations the plans published by Garstang have to serve as the basis for a reconstruction of the nature of the building. His plans published in 1924 show the main area as an open court surrounded by a colonnade (the "peristyle"), with heart-shaped columns at its four corners. The plans contain a number of inaccuracies and hypotheses not proven by excavation. Garstang himself stated that he was able to "test the continuity of the walls and other features by probings — a most unsatisfactory method".[88] For a restoration of the colonnade he wrote "that which fits best upon the foundations shows six columns in front and twenty-four columns by the side,[89] including in both cases the double corner piece. With this scheme of arrangement the proportion of column and interspace (between the columns) not only looks well but conforms with an admirable example of this period to be found in the southern temple at Jerash ..." These remarks make it clear that his plan is based upon conjecture since no base was found *in situ*. Even the heart-shaped corner pillars are placed arbitrarily on the plan. Only a single piece is illustrated and mentioned as found in the area of the NE corner,[90] and a pedestal and base of this shape still remains at the N entrance, evidently not far from its original location. A similar block is mentioned for the SE corner but it was part of a Byzantine or Muslim structure;[91] the piece in question is now found in the Curia along with many other items, but it should be attributed to the NW corner of the basilica. These items suggest that the "peristyle" was marked at only two corners — the NW and NE — by heart-shaped pillars, while at the S ends the colonnades would have ended as pilasters against the wall of the apse (fig.23). This design better fits the plan of similar structures (including that of synagogues).[92]

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83 Cf. J. B. Ward-Perkins and M. Ballance, "The Caesareum of Cyrene and the Basilica of Cremna," *PBSR* 26 (1958) 137-94. See also the grouping of Basilica Curia and Forum of the 3rd century at Samaria-Sebaste (with a Herodian predecessor).

84 Garstang 1921 (supra n.14) 73-74; 1922, 114-15; id., 1924, 25.

85 D. G. Hogarth, "Greek inscriptions from Askalon," *PEFQS* 1922, 22-23; cf. P. R. Diplock 1971 (supra n.38) 13-16.

86 Watzinger (supra n.52) 97-98.

87 Fischer 1990 (supra n.1) 49.

88 Garstang 1924 (supra n.14), 24.

89 Note however that in an earlier report (1922, 117) he had proposed a restoration of 8 by 32 columns.

90 Gartang 1924 (supra n.14), 26 fig.1.

91 Garstang 1924 (supra n.14), 33.

92 For plans of basilicas see P. Gros, *Byrsa* III (CollEFR, Rome 1985) fig.66; for synagogues see L. I. Levine (ed.), *Ancient synagogues revealed* (Jerusalem 1981) plans on pp. 51, 53.

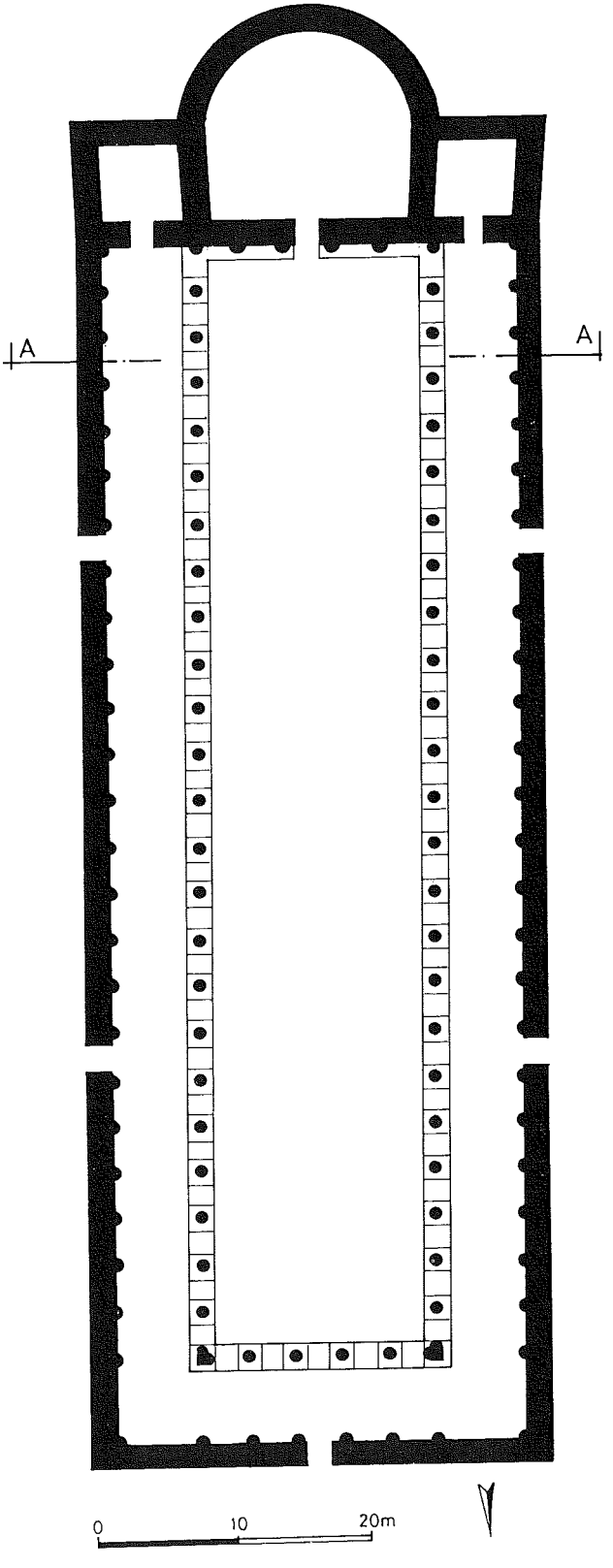

Fig.23. Plan of the basilica (adapted from Garstang 1924).

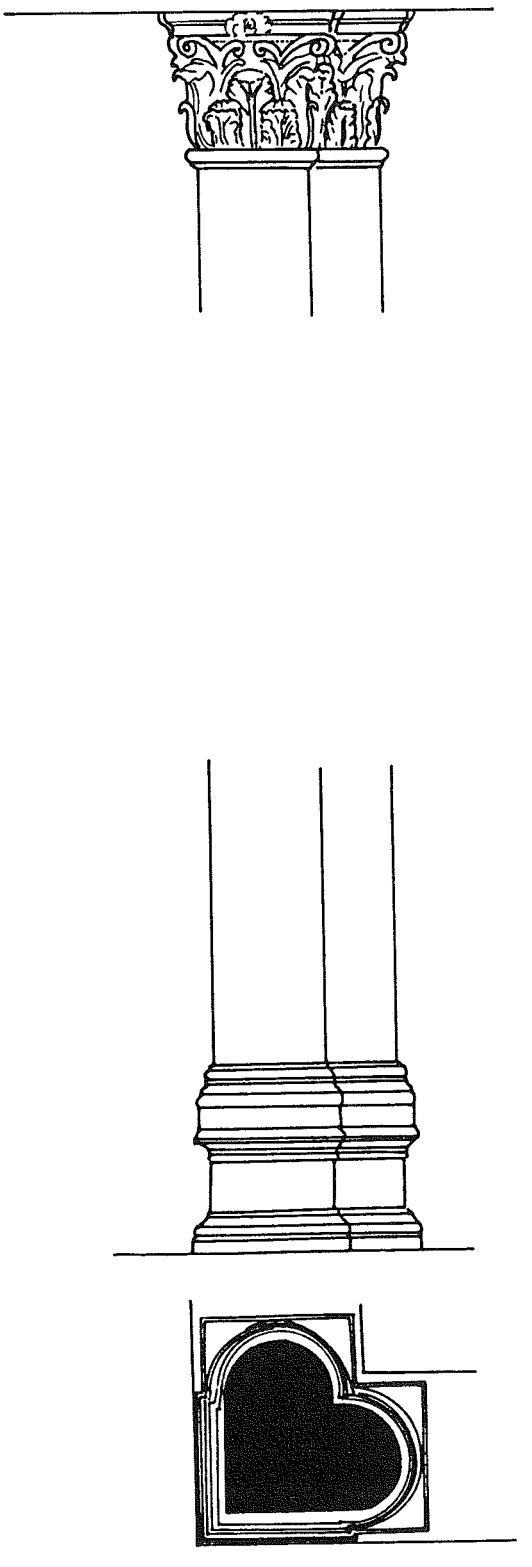

Fig.24. Drawing of the main order (adapted from Garstang 1924, pl. III).

This particular design to solve the problem of columns meeting at corners was first adopted by Hellenistic architects, and is widely used in Herodian triclinia and at Gamla.[93] It reappears in some Galilean synagogues of the 3rd c. and is also found in Roman basilicas (e.g. Samaria and a recently excavated structure at Dor[94]). A distinction should be made between the use of heart-shaped columns in triclinia or palaestras, which were peristyles with central area left unroofed, and structures where the columns supported the roof. Garstang's use of the term "peristyle" for our structure implied an unroofed building, but the available evidence suggests that it was an elongated hall whose columns were attached at the S short end by means of pilasters while at the N end were set two freestanding heart-shaped corner pillars. This arrangement would differ from that of the Severan basilica at Lepcis Magna where pilasters were employed on both short sides of the hall but it would be quite similar to some Galilean synagogues.

The architectural finds also suggest that this was a double-storeyed building, and it is also possible to add a third, "attic" storey. The following dimensions (in meters) may be proposed for the various parts of the elevation:

Lower D of the column of the first storey	0.80 = 1 modulus
H of main order (fig.24)	8.35 (exists)
architrave (half modulus)	0.40 (exists)
frieze (half modulus)	0.40 (exists)
entablature (1 modulus)	0.80 (fragmentary)
Order of the second storey	6.00 (exists)
architrave	0.30 (hypothetical)
frieze	0.30 (hypothetical)
entablature	0.60 (hypothetical)
Order of the third storey	
attic, figured pilasters	4.00 (exists)
Total	21.15 m

The height of the orders above the central nave would give a height for the roof of about 30 m.

If it is accepted that the evidence points to a typical basilical structure, its reconstruction must be attempted on the analogy of other basilicas. Basilicas are oblong, and according to Vitruvius a ratio of 1 to 3 between portico and width of the central nave is to be preferred. The portico is raised to a height of two storeys around the central nave, and there may be windows above the upper gallery.[95] The surviving evidence suggests that the Ascalon building had two main storeys and a third containing the pilasters (fig.25). This reconstruction differs from those by Diplock (fig.26) and Stager (fig.27). Garstang already established that the order of the first storey, from the pedestal and base to the capital, measured 8.35 m (fig.24).[96] Garstang also stressed that there were considerable variations in the dimensions of the different items and attributed them to inaccurate workmanship, without considering the possibility of a second storey. To reconstruct the second storey, the starting-point is Vitruvius' principle (Book 5.1) that the upper order is one fourth lower than the main order. This basic relationship is found in many surviving basilicas, including the Basilica Ulpia in Rome, the Severan basilica at Lepcis Magna, the basilica on the Byrsa at Carthage, and that at Poseidonia-Paestum.

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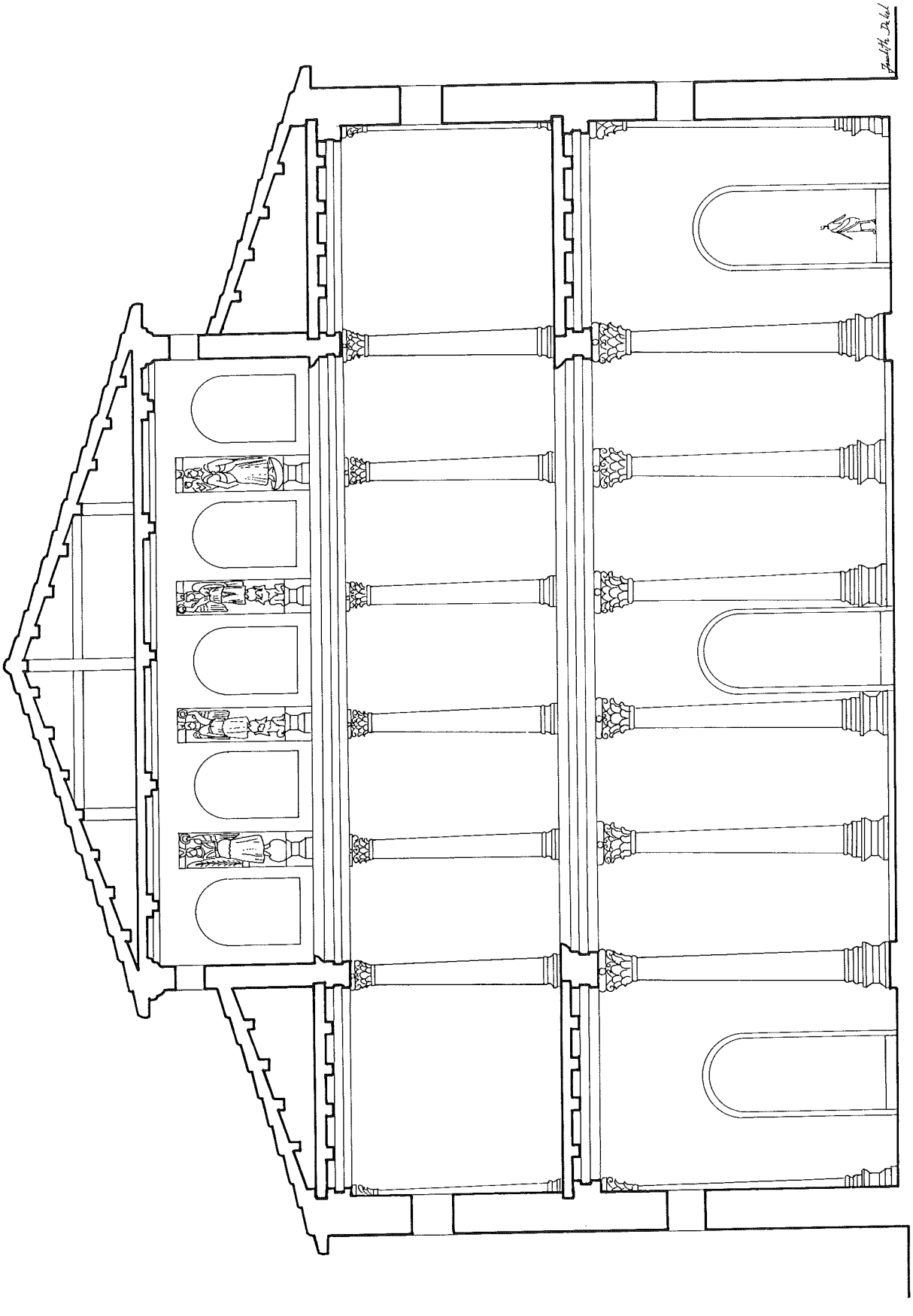
93 Levine (supra n.92) 31.

94 E. Stern and I. Sharon, "Tel Dor, 1992: preliminary report," *IEJ* 43 (1993) 129-31, figs. 2-4 (captions reversed).

95 F. Ohr, "Die Form der Basilika bei Vitruv," *BonnJb* 175 (1975) 113-27.

96 Garstang 1924 (supra n.14), 26.



A - A

Fig.25. Proposed reconstruction of the Basilica and the façade of the figured pilasters.

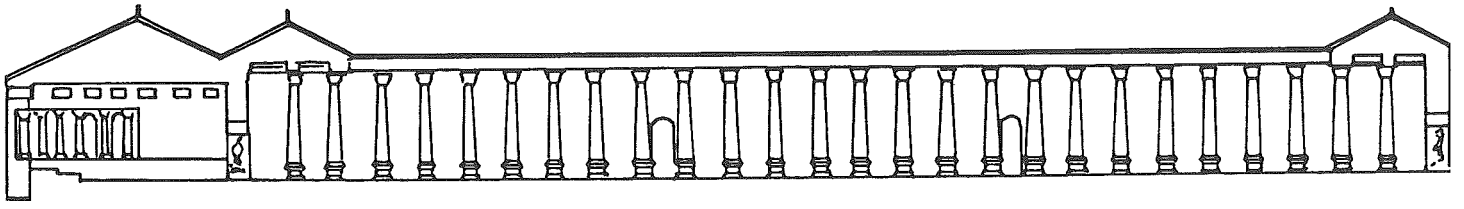


Fig.26. Proposed reconstruction of the basilica by Diplock (adapted from Diplock 1971, pl. IX).

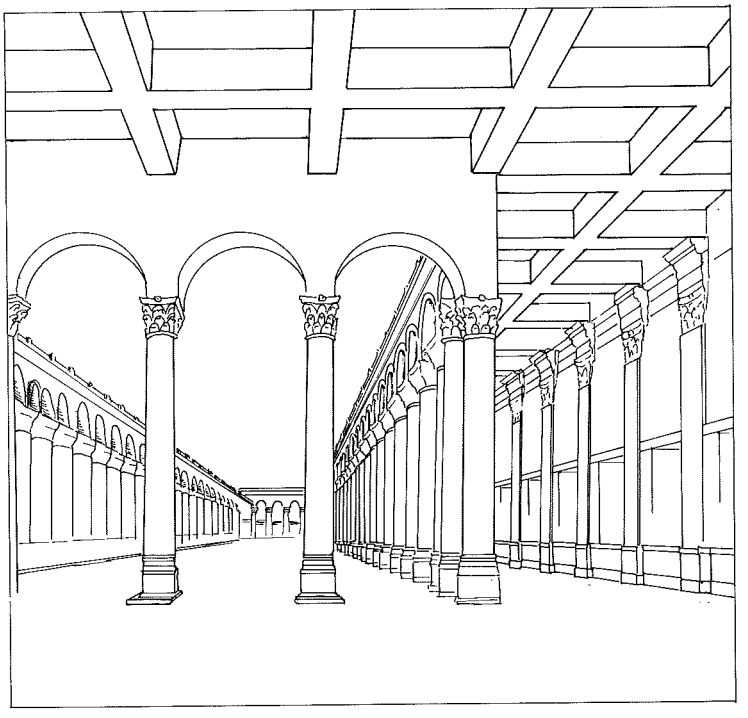


Fig.27. Proposed reconstruction of the basilica by Stager (adapted from Stager, *BAR* 1991, fig. on p.40).

Our reconstruction must remain hypothetical in many respects, particularly since many details are lacking; only further excavation can provide further information upon which to base a more secure reconstruction. The main order of the building would have contained about 50 pedestals, bases, columns and capitals, but only 25 capitals of different sizes have been recorded. Our reconstruction frees the wall of the apse from the columns in front of it, so that they would not have hidden its design that resembled a *scaenae frons*. The roofing probably had to overcome similar difficulties to those noted for other basilicas.[97] The wide span of the central nave (*c.*18 m) probably was covered by a wooden ceiling and a wooden roof with tiles; they would have made use of cross-beams, rafters, and secondary timbers over the rafters.

The location of the pilasters and the Bildprogramm of the Basilica

Two alternatives have been proposed for the figured pilasters. Garstang proposed locating them generally according to their findspots.[98] Thus our items A and C were placed as decorations of the fronts of the doorjambs between the portals that led from the basilica to the

97 Gros (supra n.92) 100-1.

98 Garstang 1924 (supra n.14), 28, pl. II, plan.

curia, while item D decorated one of the lateral doorways leading east. He also mentioned (but did not prefer) a possibility of placing them opposite one another facing across the doorway. Diplock however followed Garstang's second proposal and placed them as inner doorjambs facing one another in those doorways (fig.26).[99] Stager proposed to locate items A and C (?) as flanking a doorway in the public building (fig.27).[100] Yet this kind of decoration of doorways is not paralleled at other Hellenistic and Roman sites, and triumphal arches should not be considered analogous.

The monumental size of the figured pilasters and the character of their decoration seems rather to suggest that they would have been placed in an elevated position. I propose that they were placed in the attic of the south wall of the central nave. This location would allow them to be viewed frontally by visitors. Additional pilasters, if any, would have been placed above the aisles. This proposal conforms with Ward-Perkins' proposal to locate the pilasters of the Severan basilica at Lepcis Magna in the attic of the central nave of the basilica, as "their elongated proportions suggest that they were probably used at a considerable height above the ground".[101] Such a solution at Ascalon puts the figured pilasters in a place suiting their size and design. Since their height is 3.6 m, they could have been seen from the ground and from the galleries along the second storey of the central nave.

The cuirassed statue and the other colossal statues, of which only fragments are known, may be associated with the imperial cult in this building. The pilasters should also be understood in connection with the historical context of the Severan period. The key to their interpretation seems to be the connection between Victoriae and Isis-Tyche. The victories are depicted in many styles with many of their attributes: they are shown landing on the globe, with palm branch, and/or with wreath. All of these carry an imperial message:[102] Victories on a globe are an imperial attribute, the globe representing the imperial force of the oecumene; Victoriae with palm branches and wreaths are common representations of imperial victory. In the case of the best preserved pilaster, where Victoria is shown on the globe supported by a kneeling Atlas, another element of imperial victory is present — the enemy in the figure of the kneeling Atlas bearing the heavy burden as a punishment.[103] The pilaster depicting Isis-Tyche would represent the local, civic counterpart of this Bildprogramm. The cult of Tyche as a city goddess is found in most cities of Palestine. Tyche represented the city's essential elements as connected with the imperial power. At Ascalon Isis-Tyche is probably linked with the other representations of imperial victory. Note also at Caesarea the Tyche holding a portrait of the emperor, reflecting the linkage between the empire and its major cult. The types of Tyche in the art of Roman Palestine are eclectic: they combine elements of various deities such as Fortuna, Astarte, Isis, and others.[104] Perhaps the preference shown by Severan emperors for Isis and her entourage had a direct impact on the representations of the Tychai of the cities. In any event, the theme of the decoration of the basilica seems to be the imperial oikoumene linked to the imperial cult combined with the civic pride of the citizens. Augustus was responsible initially for creating and installing a well-organized imperial cult to bind the empire together.[105] Following Augustus' example in changing the aspect of Rome herself, cities of marble were

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99 Diplock 1971 (supra n.38), 14, pls. IX-X.

100 L. E. Stager, *BAR* 1991, p.40.

101 Ward Perkins (supra n.71) 120. This is supported by Floriani Squarciapino (supra n.22) 155-63.

102 Hölscher (supra n.44) 22 n.116; 25, 41-47 and passim. A Victoria Augusta is recorded in the interior of the basilica of Thamugadi: see G. Zimmer, *Locus dato decreto decurionum. Zur Statuenaufstellung zweier Forumsanlagen im römischen Afrika* (München 1989) 42.

103 Cf. Schneider (supra n.38) 48, n.232.

104 R. Gersht, "The Tyche of Caesarea Maritima," *PEQ* 116 (1984) 110-14; R. Wenning, "Die Stadtgöttin von Caesarea Maritima," *Boreas* 9 (1986) 113-29..

105 P. Zanker, *The power of images in the age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor 1988) 74-76 and fig.60.

Fig.28. Inscription of acclamation.

built throughout the empire as signs of a new self assurance; at the same time competition between cities left to the provincial aristocracy the rôle of intermediary in accomplishing imperial building policy.[106]

Already Vitruvius mentions the need for each town to have a shrine in the middle of the rear wall of its basilica. Under the empire the imperial cult was responsible for transforming civic spaces in almost every major town.[107] At Ephesus a royal portico was dedicated to Artemis, Augustus and Tiberius; at Rhodiapolis a temple and cult-statues were dedicated to Asclepius, Hygeia, the Sebastoi and the city. New temples were dedicated to the emperor; shrines were attached to older temples. Porticoes, staircases, colonnades and so on were dedicated to the imperial cult. In the Greek East the *Kaisersaal* took over the cult from that of the Hellenistic ruler. Fora, basilicas and their associated temples were the objects of new architectural and sculptural decoration, and imperial images became a necessity in basilicas. We may assume that the cuirassed statue destroyed by Lady Stanhope belonged to this complex and added a clear imperial message since it is very rare for any but the emperor to be shown in armour. It was precisely in the Severan period when the good relationship between the imperial house and provincial cities reached its apogee. The Severans actively encouraged civic development and new constructions, and in Palestine the Severan age was one of the most flourishing. Several towns were raised in status or received new privileges. The road system was further developed, as milestones and road installations show.[108] Septimius himself visited the country twice, first (in 194/95) punishing cities that supported Pescennius Niger and rewarding those who had supported himself, and then (between 199 and 202) restoring cities, even those which had suffered earlier. The stylistic features which connect the portrait of the priest of Sarapis with portraits of the young Caracalla (around 208) would suggest that our basilica was being erected towards the end of the reign of Septimius Severus. A marble slab (fig.28) from the area of the basilica, decorated with an inscribed medallion framed by acanthus leaves, reads in Greek: Αὐξ(ὶ) / Ἀσκαλ(ὼν) / Αὐξ(ὶ) / Ῥώμη, or "Advance, Ascalon!

106 Zanker (supra n.105) 323-24 and 302-7; see also S. Walker, "The burden of Roman grandeur: aspects of public building in the cities of Asia and Achaea," in A. King and M. Henig (edd.), *The Roman west in the third century* (BAR S109, Oxford 1981) 190, 192.

107 S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and power. The Roman imperial cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1984) 133-40.

108 B. Isaac, *The limits of empire* (Oxford 1990) 359.

Advance, Rome!".[109] This formula, an acclamation, is one commonly used both for cities as well as for private individuals. It seems to sum up the message of the basilica, combining the imperial message with the personification of the city through its Tyche. Ascalon praises the imperial power, victorious over all its enemies, and Isis-Tyche and her attendants expect to enjoy the ensuing stability thanks to the imperial power. The building combines imperial and civic ideas. Basilicas were the ideal buildings to propagate this message, and marble was the medium that placed Ascalon on a par with the other great cities of the Roman world.

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PROVENANCE OF MARBLE PIECES

by Ze'ev Pearl

The sources of the marble items were determined by the multimethod approach, as described in previous publications (e.g. *Caesarea Papers* (JRA Suppl. 5, 1992) 214-15). This approach uses several geochemical, petrographical and architectural calibrations in order to determine the source quarry. It was adopted because some overlap exists in the ranges of $\delta^{13}C$ and $\delta^{18}O$ values between quarries. Nevertheless stable isotope analysis remains of prime importance as it is the only technique for which an extensive data-base is available. That data base includes the stable isotope composition of marble samples from the major 22 white marble quarries operated in the classical world.[110] For some samples the ratio of calcite to dolomite was determined by X-ray diffraction analysis. Mn contents were also measured by electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR). For these techniques only a small sample is required, while EPR is non-destructive. Samples were crushed with a mortar and pestle to fine powder, and aliquots were taken for stable isotope, XRD and EPR analyses. The carbon and oxygen isotopes in marble were measured using the conventional phosphoric acid method.[111] The CO^2 was analysed in a Varian M250 mass spectometer, and the results are reported using the conventional (delta) notation relative to the PDB standard. Isotope values were calibrated using the NBS calcite standard ($\delta^{18}O$ = -2.20; $\delta^{13}C$ = +1.96). Reproducibility of duplicate samples is better than 0.1 per mil for $\delta^{13}C$ and 0.15 mil for $\delta^{18}O$. An aliquot of the powder was analysed by a standard XRD procedure with a fully computerized automatic Rigaku 505 diffractometer over the range 2θ = 26° - 32° at a rate of one °/min. Weight percent dolomite /(dolomite + calcite) ratio was calculated using the areas under the peaks 2θ + 30.94 and 29.44 based on the formula of Weber and Smith.[112] Mn contents were determined by EPR spectroscopy using a Varian E-12 spectrometer. The EPR spectrum of carbonates consists of 6 peaks. Quantification was done on the low magnetic field peak against the NBS 88 standard.[113] A computerized system was used for spectrum collection, baseline correction, and double integration. Analytical error is about 10%.

The following steps were followed in order to determine the marble source of each artifact and the homogeneity in the isotopic signature of groups of artifacts:

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109 It is now found in the open-air museum of Afridar: see Hogarth, *PEFQS* 1922, 23.

110 Data bases used include N. Herz, "Carbon and oxygen isotopic ratios: a data base for classical Greek and Roman marble," *Archaeometry* 29 (1987) 35-43; see also R. V. Lloyd *et al.*, "ESR Spectroscopy and X-ray powder diffractometry for marble provenance determination," in Herz and Waelkens (edd.), *Classical marble: geochemistry, technology, trade* (Dordrecht 1988) 369-77.

111 J. M. McCrea, "On the isotopic chemistry of carbonates and a paleotemperature scale," *Journal of Chemical Physics* 18 (1950) 849-57.

112 J. N. Weber and F. G. Smith, "Rapid determination of calcite dolomite ratios in sedimentary rocks," *Journal of sedimental petrology* 31 (1961) 130-32.

113 Lloyd *et al.* (supra n.110).

1. The quarry isotopic fingerprint (Qi) was determined by a convex hull drawn through the extreme $\delta^{13}C$ and $\delta^{18}O$ values for each quarry. These data were taken from Herz's data-base.

2. The artifact isotopic composition (Ai) was compared with the quarry's fingerpring (Qi) in order to determine if Ai could be attributed to a certain Qi.

3. The Mn content of the artifact was compared with the data of the Mn source quarries compiled by Pearl and Magaritz[114] while the ratios of calcite to dolomite were compared with the data of Lloyd *et al.* These steps were performmed for some artifacts to confirm the origin determined from their isotopic composition.

4. Some groups of artifacts had been defined according to their attribution to the same building, such as the theatre and the monument at Scythopolis, while others were studies of similar elements (such as Corinthian capitals or sarcophagi from Caesarea). In order to compare the relative homogeneity between different groups, the ranges and variations in their $\delta^{13}C$ and $\delta^{18}O$ values were calculated.

5. A F-test (two tailed) was undertaken to evalulate whether the variations in the isotopic signature of groups of artifacts are significantly different from that of the variation in the isotopic signature of their quarry. A significantly smaller variation for the artifacts indicates that their origin is from a restricted part of the quarry, whereas insignificant differences show that the artifacts could have come from any part of the quarry. This approach implicitly assumes that the sample data base represents the stable isotope signature of the entire quarry.

The marble origin of the following pieces could be established:

1. Two pedestals with Attic-Ionic bases	Marmara
2. One heart-shaped pedestal with base	Marmara
3. Fragment of architrave-frieze	Marmara
4. The largest Corinthian capitals (VAa and VEa)	Marmara
(Note that one damaged capital of this group seems to belong to one of the heart-shaped corner pilasters)	
5. The smaller capitals (IIIDc)	Marmara
6. Figured pilaster A	Marmara
7. Figured pilaster C	Aphrodisias
8. Figured pilaster D	Pentelikon
9. Asclepios sculpture	Afyon (Aphrodisias)
10. Attic sarcophagus	Afyon
11. Lid of Attic sarcophagus	Pentelikon
12. Roman sarcophagus of stadtrömisch type	Marmara
13. Proconnesian sarcophagus in quarry state	Marmara
14. Marble slab from area of Basilica, decorated with inscribed medallion	Afyon (Aphrodisias)

The above examination points to a differentiated use of marble between architecture and sculpture. Marble from Marmara (Proconnesos) was used chiefly for architectural decoration, while for sculpture both Greek Pentelic and Asia Minor marbles were used. This picture is consistent with the evidence from other parts of Roman Palestine and with Lepcis Magna where in the 2nd c. there was an increase in the import of Proconnesian marble.[115] The common marble sources for the marble found here and at Lepcis Magna are worthy of note.

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114 Z. Pearl and M. Magaritz, "Stable isotopes and the Roman marble trade, evidence from Scythopolis and Caesarea, Israel," *The Geochemical society, special publication no.3* (1991) 295-303.

115 Walda and Walker, *Libyan Studies* 1984, 81-92 and 19 (1988) 55-59.

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